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OUR DECLINE AND ITS CAUSES

by

AMIR SHAKIB ARSALAN

TRANSLATED BY

M. A. SHAKOOR, M.A. (Alig.)

OF

The Editorial Staff of *Dawn*, Delhi

SH. MUHAMMAD ASHRAF
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TO
MY BELOVED MOTHER
WHO PASSED AWAY ON MAY 20, 1944
TO WHOM I OWE WHAT I AM TO-DAY
AND IN THE CHASTENING ATMOSPHERE
OF WHOSE
INFINITE LOVE, INTEGRITY, INDEPENDENCE, DISCIPLINE
AND
MORAL FERVOUR I GREW UP

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This highly instructive and educative brochure was written by Amir Shakib Arsalan—the eminent scholar and divine of international repute. There can hardly be any educated Muslim who is not familiar with his name. The Amir did not spend his days in any scholastic cloister but consecrated his life to an incessant struggle against the inroads of Western powers in Muslim countries of Africa and of the Middle East. For this reason his word is of immense educative value to the Muslims of the world.

The Amir has drawn upon instances and conditions obtaining in Africa and the Middle East, as he was fully conversant with them, but the answers apply with equal justification to the conditions in Muslim India and elsewhere and for this reason it has a great educative value for the Indian Muslims as well. The plighted Word of God, according to the Amir is as much pregnant with truth as before, only the Muslims have denuded themselves of the qualities of Sacrifice, Action, Philanthropy, *Jihad*, *Ijtihad*, Soldierly life—attributes with which the Western nations are now endowed and hence their ever-increasing power and dominance.

It is rightly believed that the copies of this brochure should be widely circulated throughout the length and breadth of the country and Muslims in affluent circumstances would be doing immense service to their Nation if they distribute the copies free among poor Muslims. Since the publisher had faith in the elevating value of this brochure, the current swollen prices of production material did not deter him from publishing it in these hard days.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

A literary critic has compared translated works to the soda water that is decanted out of the bottle in which it is kept at high pressure. *Our Decline and its Causes* is twice removed from its original which is in Arabic. The author of the original is Amir Shakib Arsalan, the well-known thinker and writer on Pan-Islamic questions, who needs no introduction. With my imperfect knowledge of Arabic, I would not have dared to undertake this translation, but a few years back there appeared a translation of the book in Malayalam, by my uncle Mr. Muhammad Mohi-ud-Din who encouraged me to render it into English direct from Malayalam. It is with his active co-operation and invaluable assistance that I have been able to do it. In doing so I have endeavoured to go by the spirit and not by the letter of the book, and I believe the translation has not lost much of the force and verve of the original. The English rendering of the verses of the Holy Quran quoted in the following pages is from the famous English Translation of the Holy Quran by Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali

My indebtedness to my uncle Mr. Muhammad

Mohi-ud-Din is immeasurable. A great scholar in Arabic, English and Malayalam, and well-versed in Sanskrit and Urdu, he has been pursuing, silently and unostentatiously, against overwhelming odds, the noblest path of service to the cause of Islam and the Mopplah Muslims of Malabar, by translating and publishing valuable books from Arabic and English, on Islamic religion, culture and civilization. He is engaged in the translation of the Holy Quran into Malayalam, some parts of which have already been published, and he has brought out a volume containing a collection of Hadis. The Malayalam translation of Amir Shakib Arsalan's book was first published as a serial article in a Muslim daily newspaper and later on printed in the form of a book which has sent a wave of national fervour and kindled Islamic fire in the hearts of the Mopplahs.

As the re-awakened Muslim India is marching forward to its cherished goal, under the able and far-sighted leadership of Qaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and the renaissant spirit of Islam swells the bosoms of the Muslim youths, it is my hope that the message of Amir Shakib Arsalan will serve as an added inspiration to them and kindle the flame of Islam in their hearts, which will lead them on to victory.

Delhi

M. A. SHAKOOR

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, Shaikh Muhammad Bisyooni Umran, *Imam* at the Court of the King of Zambazi (in Java), contributed to *Al-Manar*, the well-known Arabic magazine of Egypt, a letter addressed to Amir Shakib Arsalan, in which he put two questions to him, regarding the present state of degradation of the Muslim peoples and the marvellous progress of the modern nations of Europe, America and Japan. Amir Shakib Arsalan, as everyone knows, is an eminent leader and worker in the cause of Pan-Islamism and a great thinker. He is a profound scholar not only of Islamic History, Culture and Civilization, but is also versed in several Oriental as well as Occidental languages. He has travelled all over the world and studied the conditions of the Muslims at close quarters, and published several valuable books. He is the Editor of a journal in the French language *La Nation Arabe*, which is devoted to the cause of Islam and is published from Geneva.

The original letter of Shaikh Muhammad Bisyooni Umran is not included in this book ; but the two questions he put to Amir Shakib Arsalan are :

I. What are the causes which led to the decline and fall of the Muslims in general, and of the

Muslims of Java and the Malay Peninsula in particular, in all spheres of life, religious as well as temporal ?

But honour belongs to God
And His Apostle and to the Believers.
(63 : 8)

These are the words of Allah, which we read in the Quran. But to-day, where is honour for the Believers ? While a believer remains degraded and despised and possesses nothing that entitles him to honour, except the words of Allah that honour belongs to God and His Apostle and to the Believers, how far is it proper on his part to claim honour for himself ?

II. What are the causes of the very great advancement made by the Nations of Europe, America and by Japan ? Can the Muslims also advance like them, if they emulate them in matters conducing to advancement, while holding fast to their own religion of Islam ?

The reply given by Amir Arsalan to the above two questions appeared under the title of *لما ذا تأخر المسلمون* in *Al-Manar* in a series of articles and the following pages are the English translation of these articles.

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OUR DECLINE

TO-DAY it is not in Java and Malasia alone that we find the Muslims emasculated and degraded. Their condition is the same all over the world. The difference in their state of emasculation and degradation in different places is only a matter of degree. In certain places they have reached the very abyss of degradation. At some places they are heading towards a great catastrophe. At some others their position has become precarious and fraught with grave dangers. At certain others they may be said to be but just above any immediate danger.

In short, even those who take pride in being Muslims can hardly feel satisfied with the condition of the Muslims in this 20th century, let alone those who feel no such pride.

It may be said without exaggeration about the Muslims that their condition, spiritual as well as material, is deplorably unsatisfactory.

With very few exceptions, in all countries where Muslims and non-Muslims live side by side, the Muslims lag far behind in almost everything. Of such countries I have found only a few where the Muslims are able to hold their own. The Muslims of Bosnia are intellectually and materially no whit inferior to their fellow-countrymen, the Catholic Christians and the Orthodox Christians. On the contrary, they may be said to be better off than either of them. Similarly, the Christians of Russia are in no way better off than the Russian Muslims. Before the Great War the Muslims of Azerbaijan were far more advanced than the native Christians. Although the Chinese Muslims are on the whole backward, they are nevertheless more advanced than their Buddhist fellow-countrymen. An estimate of their post-war condition has yet to be made. With the exception of the above-mentioned countries, the Muslims lag behind their sister nations everywhere. At some places their backwardness is indeed appalling.

It has often been stated that the Arabs of Singapore are financially better off than the other inhabitants of the Island, and that in some cases, even Englishmen cannot stand comparison with them. I have not been able to verify this

personally. But even granting that this is correct, it is nothing when compared to the general decadence of the Muslims.

It cannot, however, be gainsaid that throughout the Islamic world, there has been a great stir, a powerful convulsion and an awakening in matters spiritual and temporal which is indeed phenomenal. The Europeans are carefully observing these revolutionary manifestations, and are studying their directions and tendencies. That some of them are indeed apprehensive and suspicious of this awakening and stir, is vouched for by the articles and books they have published. But it can easily be seen that this forward movement of the Muslims has not advanced so far as to enable them to come anywhere near the nations of Europe, America or Japan.

This, then, is the general condition of the modern Muslims. What are the causes that led to the general degradation of the Muslims? Was it not the Muslims who were accredited with leadership in the East as well as in the West, for about eight or nine centuries, and acquired name and fame all over the world? Let us, therefore, first of all examine the factors that contributed to their greatness and advancement,

before investigating the causes that led to their decline and fall.

Causes of the Advancement of the early Muslims

The causes of the advancement of the Muslims were, briefly, those originating in Islam which made its advent in the Arabian Peninsula. Its birth gathered together and consolidated the scattered races and tribes of Arabia, brought them out of barbarism into civilization, replaced their hard-heartedness with mutual love and sympathy, eradicated idolatry and restored the worship of the one God. This sent a fresh current of warm blood into their paralysed hearts infusing their enfeebled nerves with a vitality. Renovated and inspired by this dynamic force they made themselves masters of half the world in the short span of half a century. But for the internecine strife which lifted its head once again among them, towards the close of Uthman's Caliphate and during the Caliphate of Ali, no power on earth could have prevented them from conquering the whole world.

The student of history, no less than the conquering hero, are both astonished at the great conquests the Muslims made and the brilliant victories they won within five or six decades,

notwithstanding the domestic distractions arising from the struggle between Ali and Muawiyah, and the warfare between the Omayyads and Ibn Zubair. Some of the letters written by Napoleon Bonaparte, the Conqueror among conquerors, show that he too was amazed and bewildered by the series of brilliant victories won by the Muslims.

It was the new life imparted by the Holy Quran, which had infused the Arabs with a new vitality and sent them forth from the Arabian Peninsula, decorated with the laurel wreathes of victory and leadership, with bodily strength on the one hand and inspiring zeal to preach the divine commandments on the other.

Much has been written about the condition of the pre-Islamic Arabs, their achievements and their laudable qualities. Many of their relics are still extant. Their civilization has been admitted, without dispute, to be the oldest in the world. The view that the art of writing is a product of their civilization has gained much strength in recent times. But we have no new moral to learn from these. This civilization never extended beyond the borders of the Arabian Peninsula. After the period of this civilization the Arabs were, for a time, under foreign

domination. The Persians held domination in Yeman and Oman, the Abyssinians in Yeman itself and the Romans on the borders of Hijaz and territories extending to Asia Minor. Not till the advent of Islam did they gain their complete independence. Not till the advent of the Prophet Muhammad were they known among the foreign nations, or considered as a separate race, or counted as one of the conquering nations.

It is our duty, while extolling their achievements, to study how they were awakened, how they became masters of the world, won victories, and acquired supremacy, and how they attained to such greatness and rose to the pinnacle of glory. But to-day when the Arabs and all other Muslims who followed them have sunk to the depth of degradation, is there anything left in them of those sterling virtues, to which they owed all their achievements, or is it merely a shadow of 'Iman' (Faith), a decayed skeleton of Islam, an empty name that has none of the life of action in conformity with the commandments of the Quran, that is left behind? That is what we have to discover.

As we scrutinise the matter minutely, it will be found that the greater part of the ins-

piring force that accounted for their victories and achievements has disappeared, although vestiges of it are visible here and there like the fading lines on a tattooed hand. Were it only for the bearing of the designation of 'Muslims' without ever performing the duties of a Muslim, that God had promised the reward of greatness, glory and honour for the Believers, we could have, with justice asked, 'Where is the honour for the Muslims?', as according to the Quranic verse, "Honour belongs to God and to His Apostle and to the Believers."

And it was due from Us
To aid those who believed.

(30 : 47)

Do these words of God mean that they are only to proclaim themselves Muslims but never need encounter the tribulations of life in the field of action? If it be so, one cannot but wonder at the decline and degradation of the Muslims. But the Quranic verses do not mean it; nor does God break His promises; and the Quran has remained the same as it then was. Not a syllable has been changed in its text. The change has occurred in the Muslims themselves :

Verily never
Will God change the condition
Of a people until they
Change it themselves
(With their own souls).

(13 : 11)

It would therefore have been a matter for wonder and astonishment, if, even after the Muslims had changed their course and condition, God forbore to alter their affairs, and if in place of their earlier greatness and honour He had not brought degradation and dishonour upon them.

How can you expect that God will help a nation that shuns the field of action, and that He will shower upon them the magnificent rewards once bestowed on their glorious and heroic ancestors, although they have none of the valour, vitality and stout-heartedness of the latter? Such an assumption is repugnant to the spirit of the Divine Dispensation. Is one to become great without deserts or qualifications? Are harvests possible or crops available without ploughing and cultivation? Is victory won without labour and perseverance? Can power be obtained without action? These are mere

delusions with which the lazy flatter themselves and keep themselves aloof from the field of action ; they are delusions antagonistic to the Laws of God. They are an illusion which makes the real appear unreal, and evil, good. If God ever made any one mighty and great except through one's own personal endeavour, He would have done so with Muhammad, His Apostle, without making him lift his little finger. The Apostle of Allah would not, then, have had to undergo trials and tribulations, or fight battles or otherwise labour in order to attain his ends. How absurd it would be for the present-day Muslims to desire that they should get for the five per cent work they do, the same reward as their illustrious forebears who performed their one hundred per cent work ! One gets the reward only in proportion to the work one does. To accept otherwise is not only contrary to the laws revealed to us by God through His Apostle, but also repugnant to reason. This is not the way of those who believe in God, nor is it God's covenant with them :

God hath purchased of the Believers
Their persons and their goods ;
For theirs (in return)

Is the Garden (of Paradise) :
They fight in His Cause,
And slay and are slain :
A promise binding on Him
In Truth, through the Law,
The Gospel, and the Quran :
And who is more faithful
To his Covenant than God ?
Then rejoice in the bargain
Which ye have concluded :
That is the achievement supreme.

(9 : 111)

Of these noble qualifications enumerated in the Book of God what do we find among the Muslims of to-day ? Where and what is the similarity between the state of the Muslims to-day and that of their predecessors, who marched, shouting, into the jaws of death, in order to defend their holy faith, and who were often disappointed at not finding death while seeking it along their path of duty. " It smells of Paradise "—these are the words with which those gallant soldiers of Islam urged their steeds forward. " To-day is our 'Id "—these are the words with which they greeted death, whenever they got an opportunity to lay down their lives

in the battlefield, for the safety of their nation and the security of the Divine Law. They used to return sad and disappointed whenever they failed to court death though they rode forth in search of it.

Modern Muslims and the Europeans

To-day their zeal, their fervour and their ennobling devotion to their faith, has disappeared from among the Muslims. This spirit is found transfused in the enemies of Islam, though they received no such inspiration from the scriptures of their religions. Their soldiers go forth to the field of battle vying with one another, and rush boldly and furiously into the ranks of their enemies. It is a well-known fact that no human calculation can ascertain the mass of money they spent and the number of lives they sacrificed during the last Great War. The Germans flung two million soldiers into the jaws of death. The French sacrificed 1·4 million men. The English propitiated the god of war with 6 lakhs of men. The offering of the Italians came to 460 thousand men. The number of men Russia staked in this dread game was so large that no accurate account is available to-day. How much treasure have the nations of the

world sacrificed at the altar of national glory ? Britain spent 700, France 200, Germany 300, and Italy 50 crores of pounds. As for Russia, she squandered such an enormous sum of money, that it caused a severe famine which engendered the post-war revolution resulting in the establishment of the Bolshevik Government.

Can any one point out a single Muslim nation of the modern times, which has sacrificed men and money as unstintingly and unhesitatingly for their country and their nation, as these Christian nations of Europe have done for theirs ? Only after they have done so can they ask why God has given these nations comfort and prosperity, greatness and honour, and why the same has been denied to the Muslims of to-day.

Somebody may come forward with the reply that the Muslims are poor and that they do not possess enough wealth to spend so lavishly. Granted. But let us find out the ratio of the amount spent by the Europeans to their total assets. The Muslims need not spend a farthing more than what is prescribed by that standard. But will they spend a proportionate amount ? That is the question. In Europe there were people who gave away half their wealth for the

war. No such spirit of self-sacrifice is to be found among the Muslims of to-day.

Some others may say that in the Turko-Greek War, the Turks, who are a Muslim nation, spent as much as they could, and that they are behind none in the matter of sacrificing men and material. That is indeed a remarkable thing. Among the Turks some have sacrificed one-third and some others even half of their wealth for the sake of the war. Thereby their defeat was transformed into victory by the grace of God and they became independent, great and honoured. If, therefore, the Islamic nations, following in the footsteps of their illustrious forebears, act as they have been commanded, or at least like the Europeans sacrifice their persons and properties for defending their honour and heritage and for resisting the aggressors, they will certainly be entitled to the same blessings as others have enjoyed, by dint of their sufferings and sacrifices, and will find themselves in safety and security by the grace of God.

But without sufferings and sacrifices, without the spirit of self-abnegation and the readiness to court death, without spending their wealth and properties, without the burning zeal for pursuing the right path prescribed by God,

the Muslims instead hope to defend their dignity, honour and independence, by merely praying to God for help !

God will
Certainly aid those who
Aid His (cause) ;
(22 : 40)

If ye will aid
(The cause of) God,
He will aid you,
And plant your feet firmly.
(47 : 7)

Everyone knows that God is self-sufficient and does not need the help of any one. To help God means to do what He has enjoined, and to eschew what He has forbidden. But to-day the Muslims are found disregarding either all or most of the commandments of their Holy Book. They think that they are entitled to God's help by the simple fact that they bear the names of Muslims and believe in the unity of God. They feel that they are under no obligation to strive hard by sacrificing their persons and expending their riches. Some of them betake themselves to prayer, finding it easier than the exertion of

body and expenditure of money. If by such prayer one could obtain exemption from the duty of labour and sacrifice, is it not reasonable to expect that the prayers of our Holy Prophet, his Companions and the other early Muslims were better entitled to acceptance from God than those of the present day Muslims? But none of them consoled himself with the hope that he would achieve his goal by prayer alone. If it were possible for man to attain his ambitions and aspirations by penances and prayers alone without ever being called upon to strive and labour for them, the laws of nature may be deemed to have been suspended and the principles of religion become meaningless. And then why does God say :

That man can have nothing
But what he strives for.

(53 : 39)

Has it not been said :

And say : " Work (righteousness) :
Soon God will observe your work,
And His Apostle.

(9 : 105)

See what God has said to those who shrank
from fighting :

Present no excuses : we shall not
Believe you : God hath already
Informed us of the true state
Of matters concerning you :
It is your actions that God
And His Apostle will observe :

(9 : 94)

Think of the meaning of God's words :

Never will I suffer to be lost
The work of a day of you.

(3 : 195)

Most of them are under the impression that they are true Muslims by virtue of such observances as prayer and fasting, which do not involve any exertion of body or expenditure of money, and they are, therefore, invoking God's aid at every moment. But Islam is, on the contrary, not confined to prayer, fasting, meditation or supplication. Is God to accept the prayers of those who, while they are capable of positive work and sacrifices in person and

material choose to live a negative life of idleness and apathy to action ?

The Muslims might argue that unlike the Europeans they do not possess sufficient riches and resources to spend for their common cause or to help one another with. My reply to this argument, as I said before, is that they need only spend a sum in proportion to their wealth for their common cause. Are the Muslims prepared to do so ?

They not only do not reinforce with their own wealth the Waqfs and other institutions for the collective good designed by their ancestors, but they, on the contrary, are destroying them. There is none among them to make voluntary endowments, like the Europeans, for the common benefit. How can the Muslims, who are several rungs below the Europeans in the ladder of spontaneous sacrifice, expect to have the same power and glory ? Labour for obtaining sovereignty on the earth may be compared with the sowing of seeds and cultivation of the soil. The product of cultivation is directly proportionate to the tilling, ploughing and manuring. Likewise in proportion to the defects in the process or irregularity in the conduct of work, the product of work also will be slender.

Without making the sacrifices the Europeans make, without courting the sufferings they court, and without incurring the expenditure they incur, the Muslims want the same sovereignty and the same powers as they possess. But are we to forget the words of God :

Be sure we shall test you
With something of fear
And hunger, some loss
In goods or lives or the fruits
(Of your toil), but give
Glad tidings to those
Who patiently persevere.

(2 : 155)

I have heard several Muslims say : We have spent ; we have sacrificed ; we have lost men ; all such trials have been endured. They were all in vain ; the Europeans are still lording over us. All that I have to ask them is this : how far are the two cases parallel, the alleged sufferings and sacrifices of the Muslims, and those of the Jews and the Christians ? Can it be proved that we have made at least one sacrifice where others have made a hundred ?

Take the case of Palestine as an example.

It is a very recent event. There have been several sanguinary riots and clashes between the Arabs and the Jews. There were sufferings and loss of life on both sides. From every corner of the earth the Jews began to help their brethren in distress in Palestine. Naturally the Islamic world too bestirred itself to help the Arabs. The Jews collected one million pounds in no time for their brethren in faith. The collection made by the Muslims amounted in all to thirteen thousand pounds—about a hundredth part of the sum collected by the Jews. Here, too, some people may say that the Muslims are not so rich as the Jews. But, be the Jews richer or poorer, all that I have to say is that the Muslims spend only in the same proportion to their wealth, as the Jews and the Europeans spend, and that those among them who have not adequate means of livelihood need not spend anything at all.

There is no blame
On those who are infirm,
Or ill, or who find
No resources to spend
(On the Cause), if they
Are sincere (in duty) to God

And His Apostle :
No ground (of complaint)
Can there be against such
As do right :
(9 : 91)

The ground (of complaint)
Is against such as claim
Exemption while they are rich.
They prefer to stay
With the (women) who remain
Behind :
(9 : 93)

If the Jews are superior to Muslims in point of wealth, the Muslims are superior in numbers and might. While the Jews number only two crores, the Muslims are 35 crores. Had they contributed one *Qarsh* (two annas and a quarter) per head to the Palestine Fund, – there can hardly be anyone among them who cannot afford this trifling sum, however poor he may be—it would have amounted to three and a half million sterling. Well, we may leave out nine out of every ten of them. The remaining 10 per cent. that is, three and a half million of them, make up the populations of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Najd, Hijaz, Yemen,

Oman, etc., in the vicinity of Palestine itself. Had they alone contributed one *Qarsh* each, would it not have amounted to £ 35,000 ? The total contributions received by the Muslims of Palestine amounted to less than two-fifths of a *Qarsh* (eleven pies) per head for one-tenth of the entire Muslim population. Is it what we call our 'sacrifice' ? Is it how we do '*jihad*' with our body and wealth, in the path of God ? Is it the value we assign to our neighbours and our brethren in faith who stood against the aggressors in defending the Bait-ul-Muqaddas (Palestine) which was our first *Qibla* and the third *Haram* ?

The Believers are but a single Brotherhood : says Allah (49 : 10).

Is this, then, how one brother helps another ?

Everyone asks how the British nation acquired such might and splendour, greatness and glory. It was through their uprightness and conduct that they achieved greatness and glory in the world. I deem it pertinent to mention in this connection an incident reported to me by a very reliable person. He was well acquainted with a well-to-do Englishman who lived somewhere in these Eastern countries.

This Englishman had instructed his servant to buy all the necessaries from the shop of an English merchant of his town. Finding that during a certain month there was a saving of £ 10 in the expenditure according to the grocer's bill brought by the servant, he asked him to account for the saving. The servant replied that the account with the English merchant was closed, and that a fresh account was opened with a native Arab merchant. "Henceforth all transactions should be made with the old English merchant," was the prompt reply of the master to his servant. "That would entail a loss of £ 20 per month," rejoined the servant. "Never mind the loss of £ 20. Go there." This was his peremptory order to his servant. Almost all Englishmen residing in foreign countries usually have the more costly articles imported direct from the London merchants and keep them informed of their future requirements. Thus they prevent their money flowing into the hands of foreigners. But the Muslims regard it as a matter of pride to go to a European's shop, leaving aside their own brethren in faith, their fellow tribesmen and their fellow countrymen, although they have been advised to buy things of these latter and convinced that, for

each article they buy of a European, they pay at least one anna in excess. Is it not this quality of the Arabs in Palestine that accounts for the failure of their boycott of the Jews? They threw away their sharpest weapon—the weapon of boycott of the Jews in all matters of give and take with them, for a mess of pottage! They do not realise that their policy of give and take with the Jews is infinitely more harmful to them than the loss of the trifling gain they might be making thereby.

Expostulating with an Egyptian leader once I told him that if their spirit of Islamic brotherhood and their feeling of good neighbourliness did not prompt the Egyptian Muslims to support the Muslim warriors who were fighting against odds in Tripoli and Barqa, at least in the interest of Egypt's own independence and well-being, it was their duty to help them, as the presence of the Italians in Barqa was no less a menace to Egypt than the British power in Sudan was a source of danger to her. He replied that though the Egyptians spent much money for Tripoli when the Italians invaded it, the Italians succeeded in establishing themselves there. "Well, the prompt action taken by Egypt in the Tripolitan war has won the admiration of not only

every Muslim but every man who knows what honour is. But every one knows what the Egyptians contributed to the Muslims of Tripoli. Yes, they spent a hundred thousand pounds. But do the Muslim neighbours of Tripoli expect that they can rescue Tripoli from the ravenous maw of the Italians with this amount? What are we to think of this sacrifice, whether as too much or too little, when compared with the enormous sacrifices made by Italy in men and money?" That was all I could say in reply.

The contributions which the Tripolitan Muslims received from the Egyptians during that war was one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. The Turkish Government spent about a million pounds. To what purpose?

Firstly, the honour of the Muslims was vindicated. Besides, the Europeans became convinced that the Muslims were not dead, and that they would never surrender their country without a fight. All those who have open minds, will admit that this has done much good for the Muslims internally and externally.

Secondly, although the contribution received from outside was insignificant in comparison with the expenditure incurred by the nation

involved in war, it was chiefly this contribution that prompted them to resist and fight the enemies patiently and resolutely with the confidence that they had their brethren behind them. It was this dogged resistance that inflicted on the Italian aggressors indescribable hardships and sufferings and miseries and made several politicians of Italy regret the Italian declaration of war on Tripoli.

Thirdly, whatever be the number of Arabs who lost their lives in this war, the number of Italians killed is several times greater. The Italian loss in this war was simply staggering. In the battle of 'Quvaihat' a hundred and fifty Arabs fought from day-break till night-fall against an Italian army of three thousand strong and almost all of them were killed, when the Italians retired victorious apparently with no loss. The Arabs were grieved over this tremendous loss. When they were plunged in grief, they received information from Constantinople, that a secret communication was received there containing the official news sent to Berlin by the German Ambassador in Rome, the purport of which was that in that battle the Italians had lost 1,500 men and that seven Italian generals had gone mad. And this battle was but one

among at least fifty similar battles. In this way, the Muslims fought against an army twenty times larger and annihilated one half of it, that is, an army division ten times as large as their own.

O Apostle ! rouse the Believers
To the fight. If there are
Twenty amongst you, patient
And persevering, they will
Vanquish two hundred : if a hundred,
They will vanquish a thousand
Of the Unbelievers : for these
Are a people without understanding.
For the present, God
Hath lightened your (task),
For He knoweth that there is
A weak spot in you :
But (even so), if there are
A hundred of you, patient
And persevering, they will
Vanquish two hundred, and if
A thousand, they will vanquish
Two thousand, with the leave
Of God : for God is with those
Who patiently persevere.

(8 : 65, 66)

OUR DECLINE AND ITS CAUSES

Fourthly, in this year of war with Tripoli, 1911-1912, Italy had to spend £ 100 million. During the following two decades they spent 300 million. The war with Tripoli is nevertheless not concluded.

This is the result of the little help given to the Tripolitan Muslims by their fellow Muslims from outside. But the Muslims hoped that a world power like Italy, ruling over 41 million people and commanding an annual income of £ 200 million, could be defeated in another battle or driven out in one year's war. When this proved impossible, all their hopes were dashed to pieces, their stir and activities ceased; some of them even sank into the abyss of despondency. But despair is but another form of disbelief according to the Quranic verse :

Truly
No one despairs of God's
Soothing Mercy, except
Those who have no faith.

(12 : 87)

Instances reflecting this mentality of the Muslims may be multiplied. I shall, however, cite only one more example in this connection.

OUR DECLINE AND ITS CAUSES

It is a well-known story how the Muslims of Riff withstood the Spanish forces for a considerable time, and how in the end they swept them out of the land destroying 26,000 Spanish soldiers and capturing 176 pieces of cannon in a single battle. The population of Riff at that time, young and old all told, was only eight thousand, while that of Spain was 22 million. The greater part of Riff is desert land. The inhabitants of this country are all poor, living from hand to mouth. That this poverty-stricken people stoutly resisted the Spaniards, fighting them tooth and nail, has extorted the admiration of the whole world.

Had the people of Riff been Christians they would have obtained contributions of millions during such a critical struggle by secret means or through the Red Cross Association. But what contributions did the Muslims of Riff receive on that occasion ?

Later, the French came to the succour of the Spaniards and sent an army of three hundred thousand strong to fight against the Riff. This army invaded their country by land and sea and their aircraft flew over every nook and corner of the country dropping bombs wherever they went. An American air squadron came flying

OUR DECLINE AND ITS CAUSE

all the way from New York for helping the Spanish and French air forces sufficient. To assist two Christian powers to subjugate the Riff Muslims, a third Christian power came flying from afar.

Nevertheless the Muslims stood still watching the Riff War with folded arms, and with folded arms they waited for one year. At last a few individuals among them woke up here and there and resolved to collect something to help the people of Riff, who were in dire straits by that time. The present writer contributed £ 4 as an encouragement to others. But what was the magnitude of the contributions made by the entire Muslim world in their overbrimming zeal? Just fifteen hundred pounds!

The Perfidy of certain Muslims

It would have made no difference in the plight of the Riff Muslims if even these contributors had watched the struggle with folded arms, unmoved by their helpless condition. But one section of them opposed the Riff people more ruthlessly than even the foreigners. Several tribesmen, who were distinguished for their prowess and numerical strength united in opposition to Muhammad ibn Abdul Karim

They aspired to an alliance with the French and the Spaniards. They tried to curry favour with them and hankered after honours and titles from them. In their selfish greed they never hesitated to engage in traitorous activities against their brethren who were their fellow countrymen and co-religionists. In Syria, during the anti-French agitation, and in several other Islamic countries one section of the Muslims in like manner betrayed their own brethren, joining hands with the foreigners who tried to subjugate them. When the Muslims themselves feel no qualms of conscience to engage in activities which amount to digging their own graves, how can my brother Shaikh Muhammad Bisyooni Umran wonder that the Muslims are not in possession of the greatness, glory and honour that God had promised them ?

If any one says to these Muslims who have betrayed their own brethren and sided with their enemies : " How can you act like this ? You know that this is repugnant to the spirit of Islam and detrimental to its glory, greatness and honour, to its dignity and advancement, to its social welfare and political solidarity.", their reply would be : " What ? How are we to remain idle, when these foreigners have committed the

whole affair to us ? Unless we do something, we shall fall an easy prey to their invasion, and then be compelled to fight shoulder to shoulder with them from fear of them."

Do ye fear them ? Nay,
It is God Whom ye should
More justly fear, if ye believe !
(9 : 13)

This Quranic teaching has faded out of their memory !

Be ye not afraid
Of them, but fear Me,
If ye have Faith.
(3 : 175)

This is what Allah says.

How absurd their reasons and excuses are ! There is no occasion for them to fear that they will be struck by thunder bolts or be swallowed up by the earth in a yawning quake, unless they act in accordance with the behests and manoeuvres of these foreigners. If the foreign intruders in Muslim countries are enraged at those

Muslims who refuse to betray their own brethren in pursuance of their behests, it is because most of them offer help to these foreigners betraying their own brethren and enthusiastically assist them with advice against their own nation and faithfully co-operate with these foreigners from greed and perfidy. But for the assistance obtained by the foreigners through the treachery of one section of the Muslims and the zeal with which the latter rendered them help against their own countrymen and brethren, these foreigners would have neither usurped their sovereignty and established their rule over them nor acted in such a manner as to contravene and supersede their religious laws and undermine the foundations of those social codes and conventions which are the off-springs of those laws ; nor would they have dragged down the Muslims into the valley of the shadow of death and laid them to a disgraceful death.

Death is of two kinds. One is death for the sake of living. That is the sort of death that the Quran exhorts the Believers to welcome joyously with open arms, when their enemies stretch their cruel paws for crushing them to death. That is the sort of death glorified by the Arabic poet in the following lines :

“ I lagged behind that I might live ”

But I found that there was no life for me except that I advanced.”

That is the sort of death which a Frenchman, a German and an Englishman greet with open arms, so that France, Germany and the British Empire may live, and that is the sort of death they look upon as a sacred duty, admitting of not a moment's pause or delay.

The other is the slow lingering sort of death. That is the sort of death that befalls those Muslims who dance attendance on the foreign usurpers of their country. The Moroccan Muslims believe that their French overlords would help them against their enemies, if they helped the French against the Germans. Similarly, the Indian Muslims are supporting the British in their effort to subdue their enemies. The Tartar Muslims are laying down their lives for the victory of Russia. What is the result of all this ? With each victory over their enemies, the French campaign of plunder, exploitation, oppression and ruthless tyranny, for trampling the Moroccan Muslims under their heels and usurping their rights is growing stronger day by day. This is evident from the growth of the French

designs on Morocco since the Great War and the commencement of the missionary work among the Berber Muslims for converting them to Christianity.

In short, the Berber Muslims made their alliance with the French and sacrificed their lives in Syria and on the banks of the Rhine, only to paralyse Morocco by draining its energy and vitality. It is an incontrovertible fact and a matter of experience that each nation France subdues with the help of the Moroccans, soon after becomes an additional instrument of persecution and repression and a useful means for trampling upon the Moroccans themselves. Same is the result of the help received by Britain from the Indian Muslims. This has helped them to perpetuate the political slavery of India. No whit different is the result of the Tartar's services to Russia. Thereby the iron grip of Russia is only tightening over the Tartars.

This is sheer death for death's own sake and is not an honourable death. But the Muslims do often run straight into the jaws of death, without ever taking a turn or curve or feeling any hesitation. This sort of death is seen when some of the Moroccan Muslims die

pouncing on their fellow Muslims to prevent them from shaking off the French yoke which, if it does not break their back and kill them outright, weighs hard on their backs, paralysing their nerves and rendering them worse than dead though still alive.

Had these dishonourable deeds been done by the mere ignorant laymen, it would not have been so puzzling. We could have consoled ourselves that they were following like sacrificial beasts the men who were leading them and that they did not know what the Quran taught, nor what the traditions of the Prophet and his companions were, nor what their national solidarity demanded, nor which way the modern world was moving. But the pity of it is that this treachery and betrayal spring from those who pride themselves as being men of light and leading. The best illustrations for the above statement are furnished by Maqree the Honourable Minister of Morocco, who evinces greater zeal and enthusiasm than even the French for removing Islamic laws and traditions from among the Berber Muslims; Baghdadi Pasha Fez who caused more than a hundred Muslim youngmen to be flogged and expelled from Fez for gathering in the mosques of Morocco

and praying : " O Merciful God ! have mercy on us in our miserable fate ! Save us and our Berber Muslim brethren from ever being disunited " ; and the Mufti of Fez who pronounced his verdict that the displacement of Islamic laws from among the Berber Muslims and their consequent abrogation did not mean the expulsion of the Berber race beyond the frontiers of the Islamic polity.

Each one of these traitors has attained to the height of glory through acts of treachery and tyranny, each one has robbed the nation of its wealth for self-aggrandisement, and each one has sported with the national interests as a pleasant pastime. Even to-day—even at this last end of their inglorious career they are carefully preserving their alliance with the French and serving them faithfully, in order to keep their position and estates intact at the cost of their welfare in this world as well as in the next.

They and other Moroccans of the same ilk are aware of the French designs and motives in enforcing their new deal among the Berber races. There is hardly any one among them who is not aware of the presence of a whole regiment of Parsons, Fathers and Sisters in the

country, who wander over the Berber provinces as French spies, erecting churches and going about the country hunting for helpless children and orphan boys, the poor and the needy and the hare-brained believers. They know very well how the French have prohibited the Muslim divines and public leaders from preaching among the Berbers, so that the propaganda of Christian missionaries may go on without let or hindrance. This Maqree and this Baghdadi form the vanguard of those who execute the prohibitory orders on the Muslim divines and prevent copies of the Quran from circulating in the Berber provinces. It is this Maqree who granted a subsidy from the Public Exchequer to the journal called: "The Catholic Morocco" which severely ridicules Islam and showers upon it endless contumely and baseless allegations and incessantly abuses and reviles the Holy Prophet Muhammad in the most obnoxious and vituperative language.

This is the state of affairs ; but what about Maqree ? That gentleman says his prayers five times a day ; observes fasting ; and has engaged seven persons under him for performing divine services and rites. And Baghdadi ? This execrable scoundrel is a man who kisses the

shrines, makes offerings and supplications to the saints and shows hypocritical devotion and pretended fear of God. As regards the Mufti, does it not go without saying that he rigorously observes not only the five times of prayers daily but all other prayers, and never commits the slightest default about fasting?

In the early days of the French rule in Syria, I could personally observe certain similar things. The perfidy of the 'turbaned heads' did not directly affect the religious question. It was only a few persons with round turbans and flowing garments, stout necks and pot-bellies, who came to acquiesce in the French demand that they should telegraphically send a protest to the French Assembly to express their opposition to the proceedings of the Syria-Palestine Conference which had assembled to consider and devise ways and means for preserving the independence of Syria and Palestine. How can one help cursing them? After having cursed the Hon'ble Minister and the Grand Mufti of Morocco, if I were to leave out the turbaned traitors of Syria, my Moroccan brethren, I am afraid, will censure me, and I therefore deem it meet and proper to invoke the curse of God on them too. May God destroy them all! May

God destroy all those people of the East and the West, who join hands with their enemies and help them in their designs against their religion and their country.

Shaikh Bisyooni Umran may say that they are but a handful, and that it is not right to hold the entire Muslim community responsible for the treacheries and atrocities perpetrated by them. But he must remember that though treacheries spring from particular places, their dangerous consequences affect one and all collectively. Well, I nevertheless refute the statement that they are but a few individuals, and that the Muslim community cannot therefore collectively be blamed for their misdeeds. If the community which stood behind them, had realized that those who sold their material interests to foreigners, would subsequently sell their religious interests as well; if, instead of living in their houses with stoic indifference and unruffled serenity, when the French made demands on a group of them which militated against their national and religious interests, and when obedience to them was tantamount to suicide on their part;—if they had scornfully disregarded the French blandishments and disdainfully spurned the splendour and glory

which their obedience to the French could purchase for them, and if acting thus one and all of the community had abstained from serving them, the French would have realized that their tactics were futile and that it were wiser to refrain from all attempts to poison the Berber race. But because they are sure of the support of a group of people who pretend to be Muslims, they persist in their policies. The French appear innocent in the eyes of outsiders; because they go about proclaiming that they never do anything overtly or covertly to the detriment of Islam, because in fact they have employed some of the traitorous leaders of Islam itself for the execution of their policies. The responsibility lies ultimately on the Muslims themselves.

Are we not told by the French themselves that all decrees enforced in Morocco in respect of the Berber Muslims are the work of the Sultan and his Government ?

Shaikh Bisyooni Umran complains that God has not vouchsafed honour and greatness to Islam. Is it about this Islam which counts such people among its followers that he complains ?

Nor would thy Lord be
The One to destroy
Communities for a single wrong-
doing,
If its members were likely
To mend.

(11 : 117)

So sayeth God. These so-called Muslims—these degraded and demoralised Muslims—who oblivious of the miserable plight of their nation selfishly hanker after their personal comforts and individual well-being, are recklessly playing with those very cardinal virtues by which Islam is to be judged and understood. Therefore that it might serve as an object lesson for them, that they might taste the bitter fruit of dereliction of duty and that they might clean themselves and purge themselves of the evil in them, like gold purified in fire, God has allowed them to be enslaved, their rights to be usurped and their countries subjugated :

Mischief has appeared
On land and sea because
Of (the meed) that the hands
Of men have earned,

That (God) may give them
A taste of some of their
Deeds : in order that they
May turn back (from Evil).
(30 : 41)

The worst enemies of the Muslims are Muslims themselves. No sooner does a Muslim set himself to the service of his religion or country, than his enemies get wind of it through his own brother. On the pretext of helping the traitor who trades in tale-bearing with the enemies for his own selfish and personal ends, they (the enemies) persecute the Muslim who started the good work and thwart all his efforts by placing impediments in his way. Thus it is that the morale of the Muslim nation has been shaken.

How true are the words of Ibn Saud : " I never apprehend danger to the Muslims save from the Muslims. Of none else am I so much afraid as of the Muslims " !

He is absolutely true. Of the victories the foreigners have won in Muslim countries, more than half they owe to the co-operation and assistance of the Muslims themselves, because it was they who furnished their enemies with the

secret intelligence regarding their own community. How many among the Muslims are engaged in advocating the cause of the foreigners and doing propaganda for them among their own community? How many are brandishing their swords at their own community on behalf of the foreigners, and how many are spilling the blood of their own brethren in their effort to serve them and curry favour with them!

The Believers are but
A single Brotherhood.

(49 : 10)

And he
Amongst you that turns to them
(For friendship) is of them.

(5 : 54)

God only forbids you,
With regard to those who
Fight you for (your) Faith,
And drive you out
Of your homes, and support
(Others) in driving you out,
From turning to them
(For friendship and protection)

It is such as turn to them
(In these circumstances),
That do wrong.

(60 : 9)

So fear
God, and keep straight
The relations between yourselves :
Obey God and His Apostle,
If ye do believe.

(8 : 1)

What do these words of God signify ?
And where is the Islam and *Iman* of these
Muslims ? Is this what is called surrender to
God and submission to His Prophet ? Is this
the faith (*Iman*) that sustains the faithful and
maintains the brotherhood ?

Is God to reserve all worldly power, glory
and wealth for those who sell their religion and
nation for a mess of pottage and obsequiously
bow before their foreign enemies ? If they are
told that they are betraying the cause of
their own religion and nation, their excuses
will be : " We haven't got the power to resist
these foreigners." " We are shielding our-
selves against their wrath." " Of two evils we

are but choosing the lesser one," and so forth. But there is not an atom of truth in what they say. They could defend their religion with their swords; or else they could at least have defended it with their pens. If even that was not possible, could they not defend it with their tongue? They can do none of these. The truth is that they prefer to curry favour with the foreigners—their national enemies—as against their own nation. They prefer to work as spies for the foreigners in their own country and to serve as beasts of burden for foreign cargo in opposition to their own fellow countrymen. Though this is their state, they feel no qualm of conscience about it. They appear to enjoy with complacency the evil fruits of what they do. They seem to sleep in comfort and enjoy with relish all that they get by selling Muslim rights and spilling Muslim blood. They have no conscience to torment them inwardly; they find no daring Muslim to chastise them physically.

Let it not be understood that all that I have said here applies equally to the entire world of Islam. The case of the Afghan nation is different. They remain a living nation as they could not be caught in the

foreign trap. Similarly in Najd it is impossible to find anyone who will dare betray his nation. The Egyptians are so much advanced politically, that they have a clear insight into this matter, and every one of them realizes the peril of showing any friendliness or regard for the foreigners or rating their judgments higher. In any other Muslim country, no Muslim fears that any evil consequences, dangers or molestation will befall him if he were to ally himself openly with the enemies of his religion and his country.

God has promised, to those
Among you who believe
And work righteous deeds, that He
Will, of a surety, grant them
In the land, inheritance
(Of power), as He granted it
To those before them; that
He will establish in authority
Their religion—the one
Which He has chosen for them ;
And that He will change
(Their state), after the fear
In which they (lived), to one
Of security and peace :

‘They will worship Me (alone)
And not associate aught with Me’.
(24 : 55)

Can this verse be ever mistaken to refer to these so-called Muslims who engage in activities directly inimical to their own brethren, turn traitors to their religion, and are always ready to dance to the tune of their enemies, for appeasing them and for acquiring fleeting material wealth and ephemeral worldly pleasures? If anyone has mistaken so, God forgive him! Is it possible even to think so when He speaks of good deeds as the essential fruit of faith? How vile and despicable are the deeds they have committed, to their own great detriment! These Muslims would hardly deserve any recompense from God even if they had not engaged in conspiracies against their own religion, or placed themselves at the beck and call of the covetous foreigners for undermining their own nation, or lent their shoulders to be used as a ladder for the foreigner to climb on to power and wealth. They believe they have performed their religious duty when they have said their prayers, uttered the formulas, chanted a few

verses, sung their hymns and spent their time in supplications. This is all that Islam means to them. If this were all that was needed to be a Muslim and to be victorious in this world as well as in the next, then the Quran would never have been so full of counsels, commandments and inspiring words calling upon the Muslims to serve Islam with their minds, bodies and material wealth, to make the greatest sacrifices, to be steadfast in honesty and patience, to work for the benefit of their fellow believers, to maintain justice and equity and to acquire all noble qualities. If Islam had meant only so much, God would not have said :

 Say : If it be that your fathers,
 Your sons, your brothers,
 Your mates, or your kindred ;
 The wealth that ye have gained ;
 The commerce in which ye fear
 A decline ; or the dwellings
 In which ye delight—
 Are dearer to you than God,
 Or His Apostle, or the striving
 In His cause ;—then wait
 Until God brings about
 His Decision ; and God

Guides not the rebellious.

(9 : 24)

Can my brother Bisyooni Umran or anyone else assure me, whether with the exception of a few individuals, any of them reckons Allah and His Prophet greater and dearer than their parents and brothers, their wives and children, their trades and properties, or whether they hold their love of Allah and His Prophet above their love for trivial wealth—love of Allah and His Prophet, which is manifested in the act of preserving and sustaining Islam ?

Let us see what others are doing in this regard. We might see things more clearly by contrast.

Imagine that the endeavour to convert the Berber races to Christianity takes a successful turn and that the Pope makes an appeal to the Catholics to make contributions for financing the French people who are, of their own accord, effecting a series of changes among the Berbers with the object of decoying them out of Islam and roping them in for themselves. How many million pounds, 'do you think, would pour into the hands of the Christian

Missionaries, Fathers and Sisters, for adding the entire Berber community of eight million souls to the forty crores of Catholic Christians in the world and for completing the work begun by the French by building churches and monasteries and founding schools, hospitals and poor-houses? There is not the slightest doubt that within at the most eight or nine months they will be able to collect not lakhs but crores of gold coins.

- Suppose to-day the Catholics tell the Protestants: "We permit you to convert the Berber races to Christianity. You may spend as much money as you can for the purpose." You will find a sum twice as large as the Catholics could gather pouring in within less than half the time taken by the Catholics for the same purpose.

But let us make an appeal to the Muslims: "The Berber Muslims are about to be decoyed out of Islam. It is their ignorance that allows them to be so beguiled. It is, therefore, our solemn duty to provide them with preachers and religious scholars to teach them. It is our sacred mission to build mosques and schools and found libraries and poor-houses for them and take such measures as would prevent them

from being led astray."

How much money, do you think will the Muslims spend for warding off this catastrophe? I doubt if they would spend even a hundredth part of what the Catholics and Protestants would spend.

This is the Christian loyalty and devotion to religion. There is the Muslim's zeal and devotion. There are people who ask why degradation has overtaken the Muslims and why they are not able to keep pace with others. Anyone who realises how they differ from others in the degree of awakening, devotion and sense of duty and self-respect, will easily find the answer to these questions.

It is astonishing, therefore, to see the audacity with which Europeans and their retinue of admirers and sycophants indict the Muslims as fanatics and call them other opprobrious names of the same kind, while they put on airs of indifference and tolerance in matters pertaining to religion.

There is no doubt that not only I who am writing this in self-defence—in defence of my nation and not in offensive vituperation of others—but even the learned editors of *Al-Manar* and *Al-Fatah*, and Abdul Hameed Bey,

Saeed, President of the Muslim Youth League, and all those who are defending Islam against the malicious attacks of its enemies and those who are warning the Muslims of the dangers that surround them, will be disdainfully looked upon as religious bigots and denounced as fanatics by the 'geographical Muslims' who pride themselves that their political views are super-religious and irreligious, who often publicly declare that they do not attach any importance to religion and who always try to ingratiate themselves with Christians professing proudly that they are no enthusiasts for the defence of Islam.

In these circumstances it seems that a Muslim cannot escape being nicknamed "fanatic" unless he feigns deafness when he is told of the French attempt to convert the Berber Muslims to Christianity and remains utterly unconcerned when he hears that Dutch Missionaries have converted a lakh of Muslims to Christianity. (A representative of the Dutch people blustered out in the Dutch Parliament that a million Muslims of Java had been baptised by the Dutch Missionaries and said with a shrug of his shoulders, "It is a matter of indifference to me whether a

Javanese is a Muslim or a Christian. What is of happy augury is that the Muslims of the place are being civilized and modernised.”)

But a European can spend any amount of money on the propagation of Christianity among the Muslims. He can have the service of machine guns, bombs and aeroplanes in support of this propaganda. He can either himself or through intermediaries travesty the Muslims or poison their minds and vilify Islam or misrepresent its tenets. He can send any number of spies into the Muslim countries for demolishing the edifices of Islam. He can pry upon any secrets. He is not restrained from doing any of these things. None of these disqualifies him from being called ‘cultured’ ‘civilized’ or ‘modern.’ But more astonishing than all this is the fact that notwithstanding these pursuits, attributes such as ‘cultured’, ‘irreligious’, ‘indifferent’, ‘tolerant’, etc., still cling to his name!

Those who have eyes can clearly see these things, and they are many. Everyone can distinctly see the legal contrivances adopted by the ‘irreligious’ French Government and the Catholic Government, in respect of the Berber races, for the propagation of the Catholic

religion among them. The provision in law promulgated by the Dutch Government in Java for the benefit of the Christian missionaries; the official resolutions of the Belgian Government for accomplishing the object of baptising the inhabitants of Congo; the ban imposed by the British Government on attempts to preach Islam among the Negroes of Uganda and Dares-Salaam; and scores of similar other cases which it is not possible to describe here in detail, are before our very eyes. Still our 'geographical Muslims' are trying to deceive us by saying that the Western people have kicked out religion from their midst, that they are going along the path of irreligion which accounts for their progress, and that we will never attain success as long as we follow the path of Islam.

Some have succeeded in propagating these fallacious arguments and this specious reasoning in Turkey with the result that they have found many there who accept these ideas. They are making every effort to propagate these ideas in Egypt, Asia Minor, Iraq, Persia, etc. The insults and indignities which they often meet with in the course of their propaganda, are just so much sacrifice made for their own patriotic

cause, because they are confident of converting the ultra-moderns who will fall an easy victim to their delusive doctrines:

One of the chief causes of the downfall of the Muslims is their stark ignorance. Owing to ignorance they are not able to distinguish wine from vinegar and to know a hawk from a hand-saw. Being unable to give fitting replies to the fallacious arguments and sophistries of these superficial ultra-moderns, they accept them as gospel truths.

Lack of adequate knowledge is one of the major causes of the downfall of the Muslims. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, more dangerous than ignorance itself. If any one points out the proper path to an ignorant man, the latter will follow him without putting on the airs of a philosopher. 'But one possessing 'a little knowledge' while he is incapable of understanding correctly, refuses to acknowledge his own incapacity. The old adage has it that full lunacy is better than semi-lunacy. Similarly an ignorant man is better than one possessing 'a little knowledge'.

Another important cause of the decline of the Muslims is their evil habits. The noble qualities inculcated by Islam are on the wane

among them. Gone are the strength of character and all other virtues from their midst, which the early Muslims had acquired for themselves and bequeathed to posterity as legacy and by the scrupulous observance of which they achieved their glorious victories. In so far as the conditions leading to the welfare, progress and decline of nations are concerned, character has a higher place than all the wealth of learning and knowledge.

“ Nations are only as long as their character remains ;
When their character vanishes, they also disappear.”

How true are these words of the great poet Showqi !

“

Another important cause of the fall of the Muslims is a peculiar kind of degeneration that has entered into the heart of the aristocracy and has undermined whatever virtue they possessed. With the exception of a few all of them think that the people have been created for their benefit and service and that they can deal with them howsoever they will. This thought is so deep-rooted in them that if any one tried to wean them from it, they feel no scruples in terrorising him into abject submission to serve as an object lesson for others. Also there has

sprung up a species of scholars and learned divines who ingratiate themselves with these and roll themselves gleefully in their luxuries, gulping in the delicacies of their tables freely with gluttonous voracity. By way of grateful service for this, they on their masters' behalf sit in judgment upon anyone who makes bold to tender sound advice to the rulers and sentence him to death as a heretic and a rebel.

It is one of the glorious traditions of Islam that learned men often weaned the rulers of States from their erring ways. In those Islamic countries which could boast of representative assemblies of the modern type, they ruled over men, rectified the errors of their rulers, put down all violences with their energetic protests and even forced the Caliphs and his subordinates from sinful living. They could do such thing in those days, because they were those who knew the truth and justice of things, by leading absolutely unselfish lives ; they were those who had risen to a position of universal adoration by their devotion to Allah and their humility of demeanour ; they were those who renounced the ephemeral worldly splendour and disregarded even the wrath of despotic and wicked kings. In consequence of the great influence

they commanded among the people, and the faith the people reposed in them, the Caliphs and other officers of the State stood in constant dread of them and hesitated to do anything in contravention of their wishes. But in course of time the learned men who succeeded these God-fearing divines made their learning a means of livelihood and religion a weapon with which to hunt for worldly pleasures. They made no scruples to sanction the wickedness and barbarous cruelties of despotic rulers and to pave the way for the violation of religious commandments in the name of religion itself. The poor innocent laymen were deceived by their huge turbans and glowing titles, and believed that the verdicts they pronounced on religious matters and the views they expressed about religious laws and commandments were in conformity with religion itself. What were the consequences? The mischief grew; the factors conducing to the common weal began gradually to disappear; Islam began to sink lower and lower; its enemies began to rise higher and higher; and their insolence, malice and cruelty began to grow ever more. It is at the door of these learned men that the responsibility for this change and the resultant evils

and decay and the weight of the sin must ultimately rest.

Among the factors that have contributed to the decadence of Muslims may be counted their cowardice and frenzied panic to which they have fallen victims. The Muslims of to-day, who boast of their descent from the early Muslims reputed among other nations for their death-defying courage have become mere cowards and poltroons. A single Muslim of that day could stand up to ten non-Muslims and sometimes even to a hundred. But to-day, with the exception of a few clans, all Muslims have become victims of fear—fear which cannot exist in the same heart simultaneously with the spirit of Islam. But what is more astounding is that the Muslims do not show even so much defiance of death in resisting the European atrocities on them as the Europeans show in perpetrating those atrocities on the Muslims. The Muslims see before their eyes how the Europeans are crossing deserts holding their lives in the palms of their hands and how they welcome dangers and difficulties for the love of their countries and nations. This spectacle does not arouse spirits of the Muslims. It does not touch their pride. That they should

surpass them in daring, in holding life cheap, the thought does not even cross their mind.

And slacken not
In following up the enemy :
If ye are suffering hardships,
They are suffering similar
Hardships ; but ye have
Hope from God, while they
Have none.

(4 : 104)

This frenzied panic that has taken possession of the Muslims has increased on account of their despair of the compassion and mercy of Allah. There seems to be a deep-rooted feeling in many Muslim hearts that in any case victory is for the Europeans, that they are invincible and that all resistance is futile. As this dread of the Europeans progressively increases and the plague of cowardice infects their hearts, the Europeans subdue them by mere threats, and even a handful of them make bold to confront a large collection of the Muslims. This is the exact reverse of what used to be in the days of the early Muslims :

“Cowards believe that cowardice is the best wisdom.

But it is the delusion of depravity.”

There is a well-known story in the history of the early Muslims, how a small band of twenty Muslims moved themselves from Barcelona to Fruxina, a coastal place in France, where they took possession of a hill and constructed a fort on it, and how they founded a small government in course of time when their number increased to about a hundred. The blaze of this Government authority subsequently spread itself over the southern parts of France and the northern parts of Italy, resulting in a treaty between them and the rulers of these places. Gradually they settled down on the Alps mountains and captured the mountain pass that joins Italy to France, whereupon the Europeans were obliged to pay them road tax whenever they passed that way. Subsequently this small Arab kingdom progressed very much and capturing several parts of the Bayaman state, they extended their boundaries right up to the Lake Constanza in Switzerland and included even part of Switzerland under their dominion. It was not until ninety years after

the foundation of this state, that this small nation was destroyed by the repeated invasions of the united forces of several European powers. At the time of the fall of this state, the Muslims numbered only fifteen hundred.

Some people are there who say : " Yes, it is all true; such things did happen in the past. But it was all before the Europeans invented the modern weapons of warfare. In those days there were no machine guns, bombs and aeroplanes. The Europeans were not so much armed with the power of scientific knowledge as they are now."

Not only is this grossly absurd but it is the outcome of stark ignorance and crass stupidity, for they do not realise that each age has its own particular science, industries and civilization. To the extent the modern civilization, modern industries and modern sciences suit the modern age, to the same extent did the civilization, industries and sciences of that age suit that particular age. Everything that relates to nations is likewise adapted to the needs of each particular age. The age of which the story speaks possessed all the weapons of warfare answering its needs. The weapons of these days were, the sword, the bow and the

poisoned shafts. The chemical composition of those poisoned shafts remains still a mystery. Those weapons were for them what cannon, bombs and torpedoes are for us to-day. But it is not these bombs, aeroplanes, fire throwers or torpedoes that endow a nation with mettle and resolution. Nor are these the things that evoke in their hearts the sense of national honour. On the contrary, it is honour, mettle, courage and will-to-be, that bring the bombs, torpedoes and aeroplanes into existence. These things are but inanimate and material bodies. They are no whit different from other inanimate objects; they cannot do anything by themselves. It is man—his intellect—that does everything. When man's mind is aroused and his spirit and intellectual powers are stirred, you will see bombs, aeroplanes, submarines and all the necessary weapons of war produced easily and abundantly.

But someone might put forth the excuse: "All this is impossible without modern scientific knowledge. Muslims possess none such. Therefore what is possible for Europeans is impossible for them."

Acquisition of modern scientific knowledge itself depends on deep thinking and

undaunted mettle. Where these two things are, there all scientific knowledge and modern industries will follow automatically. It is a well-known fact that the Japanese, even as late as 1868, were precisely in the same condition as the other Eastern nations. But when once they resolved to attain to the rank of powerful nations, they began to learn the arts and sciences of the European nations and to run their industries, until they have achieved a pre-eminent position within the short span of sixty years. If on learning Western sciences and attaining a status equal to that of any European nation, the Japanese can still continue to honour their religion and uphold their traditions, it must certainly be possible for every Muslim nation that desires and assiduously endeavours to rank with the powerful nations, to remain Muslim without throwing their religion and traditions overboard. When did a Muslim nation will to possess modern armaments and fail to get them? Man's will is the fundamental means to his ends. When the will is there, what is willed comes into being.

If any Muslim nation wills to possess armaments, there is not the least doubt that that very instant they will get the most modern

armaments according to their requirements. But before it comes, by them, it has to spend money with a liberal hand. But the Muslims never want to spend or even to emulate the Europeans and the Japanese in the matter of spending. On the other hand, they long to achieve victories without massive power and implements of war; they wish to acquire power and armaments without incurring any expenditure. In these circumstances, when their enemies win victories over them, how laughable it is for them to cry "where is the covenant of the Quran vouchsafed to us in the words of Allah."

And it was due from us
To aid those who believed.

(30 : 47)

On hearing this they suppose that the Quran stands security for aiding the faithful simply because they proclaim themselves to be Muslims without moving even their little finger or making the least sacrifice in body and wealth or because of their mere prayers to God and petitions to the Saints ! Thus it is that even large bodies of Muslims, owing to their

lack of modern armaments and their ignorance of the method of employing them, have been rendered helplessly incompetent to resist the smaller groups of well-equipped Europeans. Whenever there is a clash between them, it almost always ends disastrously for the Muslims. As a result of their experiences over a considerable time, they have lost their morale and given themselves up to fear and despondency. They have almost forgotten that they are Muslims, and have become runaways flying into the hands of their own enemies.

So lose not heart,
Nor fall into despair ;
For ye must gain mastery
If ye are true in Faith.
If a wound hath touched you,
Be sure a similar wound
Hath touched the others.
Such days (of varying fortunes)
We give to men and men
By turns.

(3 : 139, 140)

They have forgotten the obvious truth that on religious as well as rational considerations,

despair should never find place in the heart of a man, especially one who follows a religion which teaches that despair is a symptom of disbelief.

Men said to them :

“ A great army is gathering

Against you : ”

And frightened them :

But it (only) increased

Their Faith : they said :

“ For us God sufficeth,

And He is the best

Disposer of affairs.”

And they returned

With Grace and Bounty

From God : no harm

Ever touched them :

For they followed

The good pleasure of God :

And God is the Lord

Of bounties unbounded.

It is only the Evil One

That suggests to you

The fear of his votaries :

Be ye not afraid

Of them, but fear Me,

If ye have Faith.

(3 : 173-175)

If any one were to appeal to them for help for one of their own nations in their struggle against the aggressive foreigners who are out to exterminate them, their reply would be: "What earthly use is there in spending our money for this? It is certain that in the end victory will be of the foreigners." If they give a moment's thought to this, they will be convinced that this habit of tamely and helplessly submitting to their enemies only multiplies calamities and increases the power and audacity of their enemies. It needs no elaborate reasoning to see that it is no gain to themselves hugging their wealth to their bosoms like misers and refusing to help their brethren who are engaged in a righteous war. On the contrary what they gain thereby is but utter penury, because the weaker nations never enjoy any freedom in trade or other lucrative pursuits. Their enemies who hold dominion over them exploit all that is profitable and pleasurable in their own country and throw out only the remnants of useless skins and bones for them to lick and suck at. Thus the countries of the weaker nations very often fall a prey to famines and economic depressions and thousands die of hunger. How many such events have occurred

in India and Algeria? Though there have been frequent outbreaks of famine in India, has anyone ever heard of a single Englishman having died thereby? Although there have been very severe famines and droughts in Algeria, did any but Muslims die thereby? The obvious cause of this is that the foreigners reserve for their own use all that is best in the country, leaving the Muslims to poverty and hunger. Those Muslims who used to hoard up and enjoy wealth are now pleading all sorts of excuses in order to evade contributions to their brethren. There may be some little truth in their excuses. They ought to know that they have themselves to thank for their present miserable plight. In the beginning they behaved like misers due to their selfishness and love of pleasure, and were niggardly in contributing to the cause of their religion and their nation. They have therefore been looked down upon by others and despised as mean and miserable wretches. They have in short invited hunger and thirst for themselves. This is but a law of Nature: Meanness is always attended by poverty and magnanimity by prosperity.

Iyadi the Arabic Poet says :

“Never hoard up wealth for your enemies ; for if they subdue you they will capture both yourselves and your wealth. When you lose your nose you will not enjoy the smell of your hoarded wealth.”

Mutanabbi says :

“He has no honour in the world who has no wealth ; and he has no wealth either who has no honour.”

The Muslims began to look upon wealth as being above everything else—as their *summum bonum* ; and they began to lose it thereafter. Their love of life began to grow stronger and stronger ; and they began to lose it too thereby.

A saying of the Holy Prophet is worth remembering in this connection.

The Holy Prophet said : “Diners are attracted by dinner-sets. Likewise shall the nations be attracted by you.” Then they asked : “O Messenger of Allah ! will it be due to our numerical inferiority at that time ?” He said : “No, on the other hand, you will

be numerous as the bubbles in a flood. Your love of worldly life and dislike of death will engender fear in your hearts and it will rid your enemies' hearts of fear." The truth of the prophecy can be clearly seen now.

This Hadith was related by Al-Qitani, Shaikh of Fez, when I met him in Medina about eighteen years ago. Later on, I myself read it in books. I have cited this as a warning in the introduction to the Arabic translation of *The New World of Islam*. There is a difference of words in different versions. The Editor of *Al-Manar* is better qualified by his scholarship to decide which version is correct. The purport of this Hadith is obviously that there will come a time when the Muslim nation will be reduced to the state of victuals and that ravenous hands will be reached out to them from all directions. That time is our own time. The present disability of the Muslims is not numerical inferiority. On the contrary, their number has increased very much. But of what avail is their increase in numbers? Worthless things are worthless despite their numerical abundance. Quantity is no guarantee of quality. From the words "your love of worldly life and your dislike of death," it is clear that the worst

disease of the Muslims of that time will be their miserliness and their cowardice.

It is a commonplace observation that the more a man hankers after worldly riches the less is he able to enjoy them, and the greater the precautions he takes regarding his life because of his love of it, the more exposed to danger does he become. This is a general law instituted by God in respect of his creations ; or to use modern phraseology it is one of the laws of Nature. The Quran commands that in surrendering himself to the will of God, a Muslim should throw away as mere trifles his transitory life, his riches and everything that he holds dear. It urges upon him to maintain unflinching firmness in calamities, to remain patient and imperturbable and never to give in to despondency :

How many of the Prophets
Fought (in God's way),
And with them (fought)
Large bands of godly men ?
But they never lost heart
If they met with disaster
In God's way, nor did
They weaken (in will)

Nor give in. And God
Loves those who are
Firm and steadfast.

(3 : 146)

From the commandments of God it will be clear that He has designed Muslims to be such. If they do not try to be so, how are they qualified to beseech Allah for happiness, for safety, for peace, for blessings and for His aid against their enemies ?

*The Danger to Islam from the Sophisticated
Conservative*

Another important cause of the decline of Muslims is the blind obstinacy with which they insist upon the maintenance of hackneyed conventions. Serious are the dangers to a nation from men who condemn everything old as absurd and worthless, without giving thought to their intrinsic value, simply because they are 'old'; no less serious are the dangers that arise from the conservative school which insists that no change can be permissible in anything. If anyone endeavours to introduce suitable reforms in the system of Islamic education, they would

oppose it, saying that all these modern systems are the discoveries of the unbelievers and that emulation of unbelievers will amount to unbelief.

Thus these sophisticated "ultra-moderns" and the conservative conventionalists are ruining Islam between themselves.

These negatory sophists persist in destroying the national individuality of the Muslims and other Eastern nations, and making them disown their historical traditions. They induce them to cast their national self-respect to the winds and want them to lose their national identity by becoming absorbed in an alien body with distinctly different qualities, like the constituents of a chemical compound which have lost all their original properties. Only the mean and the low-minded can entertain the idea that man should disown his heritage, that he should look upon his forebears as fools and savages, and that he should dissociate himself from them and disclaim all kinship with them. They must be wicked hearts that take sinister delight in disparaging and denying the glories of their own nation from fear that perhaps some disgrace or ignominy attaches to their tribe or family, that they are therefore condemned to a

lower rank even in their own nation, and they have no personal claim to any share in the honour and glory of their nation. They are those who constantly act in contravention of those inherent instincts manifested by every nation in its desire to preserve its social peculiarities and special characteristics in matters like religion, language, customs and manners, dwelling places and victuals.

European Nations and their Nationhood

The best examples in this matter are the Europeans. Study them as closely as we may, we shall not find even a single nation among them that desires to lose its identity in another. The English would remain but English. The French want to remain French. The Germans do not want to be anything but German. The Italians would not live save as Italians. It is evident from all aspects of Russian life that the Russians want to remain Russians.

We see a very fascinating example in the national history of the Irish people. Although the English people, during the last 700 years, have been employing every means that human ingenuity could devise for converting this

small neighbouring nation and absorbing them into the English nation, they have all along defied every attempt at Anglicisation. To this day the Irish nation remains Irish in language, religion, customs and manners and its loyalties.

The Britons are a nation in France. They maintain their national identity and refuse to be absorbed in the French nation. In the southern parts of France there is a race of people called the Basques. They stood up first against the Goths, then against the Arabs, later against the Spaniards and finally against the French. They are but a million in number. To this day they stick to their own language, dress, customs and manners.

The Flemings who inhabit Flanders in Belgium stoutly resisted and finally foiled the French attempt to foist their language and culture upon them. At length they compelled the Belgian Government to recognise and adopt their language as the national language of Belgium.

Of the three races of people that inhabit Switzerland, twenty-eight lakhs of people speak German, eight lakhs speak French and two lakhs speak Italian. Although they are under

the same government and co-operate with each other in all political matters, each of these groups is jealous and vigilant to preserve its language, customs and national characteristics.

It is an incontrovertible fact that the nations inhabiting Holland, Denmark, Scandinavia, etc., are but branches of the same German race. But they do not care to get amalgamated with the Germans or lose their own national identities. The Czechs were under German rule for two hundred years. Not only do they remain Czechs to this day, but having preserved their language and national identity throughout the last five centuries, they also recovered their national freedom after the Great War.

Although the Germans have transplanted their culture to the Austrian races and taught them all their learning and made them advance in every way, they have not been able to absorb them in the German nation. They show greater persistence than others in maintaining their nationality and preserving their language which are of Mongol origin.

Russia, a powerful nation of Europe, had during the last three hundred years been constantly trying to absorb the Polish people in

the Russians, and contended, that the Poles were of the same stock as themselves. But Russia's endeavours ended in failure when the Poles asserted their complete independence after the first Great War. It goes without saying that the Poles owe this to their sleepless vigilance in preserving their national identity.

It is no wonder that a nation of thirty million souls like the Poles refused to be absorbed in another nation. But is it not amazing that the Estonians, numbering only two million, separated themselves from the Russian nation and refused to be absorbed in them? It is the fruit of their conviction that nothing is more precious than freedom. They loved their language which belongs to the Mongol family of languages, and they created a separate script for it. Same is the story of the Finns who also disaffiliated themselves from the Russians. This nation of Baltic stock which had maintained its racial identity before the Great War asserted its national independence after it. Their total number is only four millions. Repeated attempts of the Russians to amalgamate with themselves the Lithuanians, a section of this nation, went also in vain. The Lithuanians, who number only two million founded a

democratic government of their own after the Great War. Their nationhood was kept alive and their language was preserved, which enabled them to establish a separate independent state.

Germany and Russia, the two mighty nations of Europe, could not swallow up these tiny nations, in spite of their persistent efforts. These small nations took pride in and rejoiced over their 'past'—their glorious heritage. Instead of disowning their heritage, they held fast to it and refrained from doing anything detrimental to their own freedom. It is easy to see that they owe their freedom to these virtues.

Although the Croats were overwhelmed by the might and influence of the German and Latin races, they have maintained their nationality intact.

Although the Serbs bore the Turkish yoke for several centuries, they never allowed their national identity to be lost.

The Albanians have lived from time immemorial in the midst of the Greeks and the Slavs, but remain Albanians to this day.

Similarly, the Bulgars remained but Bulgars in the midst of the Romans, Slavs and the Latins. Later, the Turks subdued them and

taught them the Turkish language. Nevertheless they remain but Bulgars.

Such examples may be multiplied, without end. But I am not going to draw my illustrations from among Eastern nations, because if I were to cite the example of any non-European nation, then our 'ultra-modern' sophists might say that they would not follow the example of any backward nation like themselves.

All the nations that I have so far cited as examples are, therefore, European nations. Their governments are modern and constitutional. All of them possess universities, academies, scientific societies, armies and navies.

Japan—A Lesson for the Muslims

Now we take leave of the Westerners and take the example of the Japanese, who stand in every respect on a level with the Europeans in the scale of civilization. To the extent the European civilization is sufficient for the Europeans, to the same extent is Japanese civilization sufficient for the Japanese. In other words, the civilizations of both are confined within the bounds of their nationalities, languages, customs, religions, their conceptions

of freedom, ethnical peculiarities, modes of thought, etc.

The following is a translation of a portion of a lengthy article on Japan published in the *Journal de Geneva* of October 20, 1930, by a European traveller who visited Japan and studied at firsthand the conditions prevailing there :

"The Japanese love art above everything else. If you find a Japanese engaged in money-making, you must understand that it is to translate his tastes and instincts hovering over abstract conceptions of grace and beauty into concrete forms of experience, by means of that money, that he is labouring for. Next in intensity to his desire for appreciation of beauty is his ardent nationalism which goes deep into his heart. He feels proud of his nation which emerged from the tottering state of medieval feudalism and rose within the short span of sixty years to the rank of a great nation."

There is no doubt that religion played an important part in the political renaissance of Japan, which the readers will do well to bear in mind. In reality it is a philosophy built upon their conviction that all that their ancestors bequeathed to them was indispensable to

them. The modern Japanese are all reconciled to everything that is necessary and proper for modern life. But they have maintained their zeal for following the glorious examples of their past history and jealously guarded their national identity saving those few things which are indispensable for success in war with other nations, they have spurned aside everything that smacks of 'Westernism'. This is a unique example in the annals of the Eastern nations.

The Japanese disliked travelling in far-off lands and banned the entry of foreigners into their own country. But these bans have disappeared with the modern awakening. The Japanese have, in an amazing manner, made amends for their omissions ; it is the fruit of this that we see before our eyes to-day. In their eyes their past still remains glorious and sacred. They value their thoughts and ideals in terms of their sacred past. The result of all this is that they compete with others in the employment of modern methods which are indispensable to modern life. They have eschewed 'Westernisation' for the simple reason that they have no need for it. And they are daily training themselves in such a way as to relish

the savour of their unadulterated race-consciousness which is the main stay of their belief in their own superiority over others.

The Buddhist pagodas and the temples consecrated to their gods 'Shenedo' and 'Sen' are regarded with religious reverence and devotion. The rituals and ceremonies performed in these places from time immemorial are carried on even to-day with the same intense devotion and ardent faith. It is indeed their devotion to their gods and ancestors that has served them as a stronger shield and support for them even than nationalism and race-consciousness.

A few years back a new book on Japan was published in France by Marquis Lamaslier. The French Press paid glowing tribute to this book, and *Demos* published an excellent article regarding it. Anyone who desires to learn how Japan achieved her progress—and this subject has been clearly dealt with in the book which will be of great use to the Eastern people in general—must, in my opinion, read this book of which the author can hardly be considered pro-Japanese in his sympathies. In comparison with the French translations of Japanese books on the subject, I have found that this book is, broadly speaking, in conson-

ance with the books written by the Japanese themselves. I wish only to cite here certain statements made by Lamaslier in the course of his elaborate discussions about the modern civilization of Japan and her emergence from medievalism into the full blaze of the world of to-day. He says :

“ Japan began to borrow from Europe and America part of their materialistic civilization, their military system, their mass education and their methods of administration of public finance. Their reformers were engaged in copying only what they found to be the best in each nation. This was but the first step in renewing and rebuilding. This movement has begun to make itself felt in all walks of life in Japan.”

After making some observations on the Sino-Japanese war, he concludes the section thus :

“If we see Japan defeat and subdue China, we perceive therein not merely the fact that she has copied from the West its highest thoughts, sciences, philosophies and theories; but also that an Asiatic nation, by the sheer force of its will and determination, has gained the insight for imbibing all that is best in the

Western civilization, while it still holds fast to its freedom, race, faith, culture and customs."

About two³ years ago I published an account of how the Japanese celebrated the coronation of their Emperor. My account was but an epitome of the detailed report I had received. That report contained details of how the celebrations extended over a month, how they were from top to bottom connected with religious rites, how the Mickado remains the High Priest of the Japanese, and how he is descended from the sun-god ; how the Emperor bathed in the holy water of the sacred pond preserved since two thousand years ago ; how in company with the gods he ate his food made of rice specially sown and nurtured by the elders of the country, under the reverent care of the priests ; and how six hundred thousand Japanese assembled together and each of them shouted, " May the Mickado live for ten thousand years ! "

Why are the Europeans and the Japanese not branded as tradition-ridden although they are devoted to their religions ?

How many of the religious observances,

rituals, customs and conventions which originated among the Japanese as far back as two thousand years ago still exist among them in the same manner ? The Emperor is also their High Priest. How is it then that their advancement has been so amazing and at such a rapid pace, and why is it that they are pointed out as an example of progressiveness ? No one calls them 'tradition-ridden' or 'conservatives' or 'reactionaries' against modern civilization. If the Japanese are tradition-ridden, a thousand times welcome to traditions !

While the King of England and Emperor of India, who holds sovereignty over four hundred million people of the earth, white, black, red and yellow, remains the head of the Anglican Church and a member of the Ecclesiastical Assembly, why does he worry about the question whether the sanctity of the priest can transubstantiate bread and wine into actual flesh and blood of Christ or whether it is merely a religious fiction ? He is not called tradition-ridden and his Empire is not considered 'backward', 'decadent' or 'reactionary'. If, however, England with all her magnificence may be called 'reactionary', we should only welcome such 'reactionaryism' !

Why is it that all Europe is bound up with Christianity and that, in spite of the dissensions and animosities existing among the nations of Europe, they are at one in rejoicing over the glories of Christendom? Nor do we dare to brand them as 'tradition-ridden' or 'conservatives' on that score. If we study the matter closely, we shall find a hidden cord sustaining this attitude of the Europeans. The religion that prevails in Europe is one that has a long standing, a standing of nineteen centuries. Is it not a fact that the Jews—deny them whatever we may, we can hardly deny their power, their intellectual skill, their sense of duty and their gigantic enterprise—still pride themselves on the 'Torah,' which they got thousands of years ago, and the Christians share in their pride?

Why is it that the Jewish youngmen who stand in the front rank of advancement are still endeavouring to resuscitate the Hebrew language, the history of which is hard to find as it lies buried fathoms deep in antiquity? No one is heard to call them 'tradition-ridden', 'conservatives' or 'reactionaries.'

Mr. Weisman, the leader of the World Zionist Organisation, published a news in a

journal called *Al-Matin*, that the language spoken in modern Palestine was the language of the Prophets. He proclaimed it as an event, which he held out to the Jews as a warning to humanity, and which he said was a matter of greatest pride to him. By 'modern Palestine' he meant that part of Palestine which is inhabited by the Jews, where the Zionists are propagating the old moribund Hebrew language and where they have made it obligatory upon the younger generation to learn and use it in their daily intercourse, so that it may draw them closer and closer together. So if it is asked, 'who is it that is trying to make the ancient Hebrew a current language?', the answer will be, 'the Jews, the votaries of modern science and modern civilization.' Let the wise think and ponder. Many more examples could be cited to the same effect.

Every nation adheres rigorously to its religion and clings steadfastly to its religious heritage, traditions and national characteristics and peculiarities. They never speak of these things with contempt or ridicule. The Muslims alone seem not to understand their value. If anyone tells them that they should hold fast to the Quran, their faith, their religious traditions

and their national characteristics, or that they should not abandon the Arabic language, or that they should preserve their oriental mode of life and conduct and etiquette, they would yell like lunatics, 'Down with your traditionalism!' and fling at him a question: 'In these civilized days how do you hope to progress like others, with the outworn traditions and customs of the Middle Ages?'

Every nation is acquiring knowledge, advancing, progressing and soaring higher and higher to the skies. Christians still adhere to their Bible and the traditions of their Churches. The Jews hold steadfastly to the Torah and the Talmud. The Japanese cherish with reverence the representatives of their gods and their sacred race. Thus every nation is contented with and cherishes its heritage. But these wretched Muslims alone seem to feel that they would be denied all progress unless they break all connection with history, throw the Quran overboard, cast their beliefs to the winds, their values of right and wrong, their tastes, instincts and ideals, their costumes and their traditional foods, unless they do this, they believe, they will never know what is progress.

These are the dangers that arise from

these negative-minded, Anglo-maniacs, these ultra-modern sophists who mislead the innocent and simple folk with their spacious reasoning, and bear the utmost ill-will for Islam and the Eastern nations.

Incorrigible conservatism—a danger to Islam and Muslims

As for the conservative Muslims, they are, as a cause of the ruin of Islam, not a whit behind those sophists who contradict everything disagreeable to their whims. They differ from the latter only in this that they have no ill-will towards Islam, and that all their actions are the outcome of their ignorance, obscurantism and blind dogmatism. It is these dogmatists who encourage the enemies of Islamic culture to attack it, pick holes in it and argue that the teachings of Islam are responsible for the decline and fall of the Muslims.

It is these dogmatists who have made the Muslims helpless victims of poverty and indigence by reducing Islam to a religion of mere other-worldly pre-occupations. The one unique characteristic of Islam is that it is concerned equally with life here as in the hereafter.

Unlike the religions of China and India, it does not reserve the rewards and retributions of human efforts and actions for a future life beyond the grave. Unlike the Bible, it does not enjoin the renunciation of all material wealth, comforts and pleasures. Nor does it accept the view that human efforts and actions must be governed solely by considerations of worldly and material happiness, as is implied in the trends of Western civilization.

It is these conservatives who declared war on natural science, mathematics and all creative arts, condemned them as the practices of infidels, and thereby deprived the Muslims of the fruits of science. They cast the sons of Islam into the abyss of poverty, and rendered them unfit to go out in search of the treasures of science. The earth pours out her hidden treasures only for those who seek them. If we are pre-occupied, all our life, with the matters of the other world alone, the earth will meet us only with the rebuke : " You had better go direct to the other world ; I have nothing for you here." Thus when all our efforts are directed towards the acquisition of the other-worldly knowledge alone, we are rendered weak and powerless among the nations that are

engaged in acquiring worldly power and wealth. In this way they are ascending the heights of worldly power and wealth while we continue falling ignominiously down and down into the abyss. In the end, when everything has fallen into their hands, not only do they hold dominion over our material possessions, but also dare to temper with our religious rights. It is not Allah's will that we should live like this. See what He says :

God has promised, to those
Among you who believe
And work righteous deeds, that He
Will, of a surety, grant them
In the land, inheritance
(Of power).

(24 : 55.)

It is He Who hath created for you
All things that are on earth.

(2 : 29)

Say : Who hath forbidden
The beautiful (gifts) of God,
Which He hath produced
For His servants,

And the things, clean and pure,
(Which He hath provided)
For sustenance ?
Say : They are, in the life
Of this world, for those
Who believe (and) purely
For them on the Day
Of Judgment.

(7 : 32)

Nor forget thy portion in this
World :

(28 : 77)

See how He teaches in the way we should pray
to Him :

Our Lord ! Give us
Good in this world
And good in the Hereafter.

(2 : 201)

These dogma-ridden people do not perceive
that by their exclusive insistence on the other-
worldly life they are casting their own bre-
thren—other Muslims who follow the same
religion as they do—into the abyss of degrada-

tion, and depriving them of their position of honour and prestige among the nations. They are not alive to the dangers and calamities that follow from their indifference to the study of science which is the real cause of the poverty that is rampant among them and of their dependence on their enemies who do not possess a shred of sympathy for them. And it at times they catch a glimpse of their own appalling condition, they try to console themselves with the excuse of indolence: "It is our fate". This has always been the condition of the lazy in the world who depend on Fate.

It is this quality of lazy fatalism which has made the idle life appear comfortable to most Muslims. In consequence, there has sprang up among them a class of people who bear the title of 'Darvesh'. They have no trade, no profession, no calling. They are but the paralysed and insensate limbs of the body politic of Islam. It is these paralytics who have prompted the Europeans to brand Islam as a fatalistic creed that does not inspire man to a life of action and teaches that what is written in fate will happen whether one strives or not.

Quranic verses that show the absurdity of the idea of Fate.

In order to show the sheer absurdity of these delusions, there is no testimony more authentic than that of the Quran which is teeming with verses that inspire man to a life of action, awaken his intellectual faculties, stir up his spirit and teach him that good and evil, success and failure, follow in accordance with his actions. Allah says :

And say : " Work (righteousness):
Soon will God observe your work
And His Apostle.

(9 : 105)

If they charge thee
With falsehood, say
" My work to me,
And yours to you ! "

(10 : 41)

It is your actions that God
Will observe :

(9 : 94)

That we
Are responsible for our doings
And ye for yours.

(2 : 139)

O ye who believe !
Obey God and obey
The Apostle, and make
Not vain your deeds.

(47 : 33)

God is
With you, and will never
Put you in loss
For your (good) deeds.

(47 : 35)

But if ye obey God
And His Apostle, He
Will not belittle aught
Of your deeds :

(49 : 14)

To them
We shall pay (the price
Of) their deeds therein,—
Without diminution.

(11 : 15)

And, of a surety, to all
Will your Lord pay back
(In full recompense)
Of their deeds.

(11 : 111)

And in order that (God)
May recompense their deeds,
And no injustice be done
To them.

(46 : 19)

Never will I suffer to be lost
The work of any of you.

(3 : 195)

How excellent a recompense
For those who work (and strive) !

(3 : 136)

For the like of this
Let all strive,
Who wish to strive.

(37 : 61)

To Him mount up
(All) Words of Purity.

It is He Who exalts
Each Deed of Righteousness
(35 : 10)

And every soul
Will be recompensed (fully)
For all its actions.
(16 : 111)

Whoever works righteousness,
Man or woman, and has Faith,—
Verily, to him will We give
A new Life, a life
That is good and pure, and We
Will bestow on such their reward
According to the best
Of their actions.
(16 : 97)

On the Day when every soul
Will be confronted
With all the good it has done,
And all the evil it has done,
It will wish there were
A great distance
Between it and its evil.
(3 : 30)

And to every soul will be
Paid (the fruit)
Of its deeds ; and (God)
Knoweth best all that
They do.

(39 : 70)

But the evil results
Of their deeds overtook them.

(16 : 34)

They will find all that they
Did, placed before them :

(18 : 49)

That (God) may give them
A taste of some of their
Deeds :

(30 : 41)

But only
Those who believe and work
Righteousness—these are
The ones for whom there is
A multiplied Reward.

(34 : 37)

And to all
Are (assigned) degrees
According to the deeds
Which they (have done),
And in order that (God)
May recompense their deeds,
And no injustice be done
To them.

(46 : 19)

Then shall anyone who
Has done an atom's weight
Of good, see it.

(99 : 7)

And anyone who
Has done an atom's weight
Of evil, shall see it.

(99 : 8)

What they do, they will
Soon be requited.

(7 : 180)

As a reward
For their (good) Deeds.

(32 : 17)

And (a Voice) shall say :

“ Taste ye (the fruits)

Of your deeds ! ”

(29 : 55)

Thus innumerable are the verses of the Quran relating to human action and striving.

Whatever misfortune
Happens to you, is because
Of the things your hands
Have wrought.

(42 : 30)

What! When a single
Disaster smites you,
Although ye smote (your enemies)
With one twice as great,
Do ye say ?
“ Whence is this ? ”
Say (to them):
“ It is from yourselves.”

(3 : 165)

These and similar other verses directly bear upon the topic under discussion.

These verses were addressed to the com-

panions of the Prophet who were perfect in their unflinching faith and implicit obedience. Most Muslims may not be aware of this fact ; but the author of the questions must be knowing it full well. The two last quoted verses were revealed when the Muslims expressed dismay at the victory of the non-believers over them in the Battle of Ohud, so that they may serve as a reply for them and as explanation of the real cause of their defeat. The archers who had been kept as rearguard for the Muslim fighting ranks were commanded by the Prophet not to leave their positions whatever might happen. But when the enemy withdrew, they rushed forward, forgetting the Prophet's command, along with others of their own side, lured by the prospect of spoils, and the enemies seeing this outflanked them and attacked them from the rear. This is how the Muslims sustained defeat in the battle and even the Prophet himself received injuries. It is obvious that the cause of the calamity was disobedience of the archers who had been posted as rearguard to the Muslim army.

Islam is not a religion that fosters idleness and inactivity. On the contrary, these verses clearly prove that it is a religion which inspires

man to a life of intense activity and constant striving. The idle 'Darveshes' go about preaching that 'God has given us our livelihood whether we toil or not.' Many European writers misrepresent Islam as a religion that bids man submit to whatever happens, taking it all for the best, and tell the Muslims that they owe their decline and fall to their own religion. But it is clear from the verses quoted above that Islam is not a religion that inculcates faith in an inexorable Fate.

The very fact that the followers of the Prophet invited the peoples to Islam by presenting its teachings before them and that in the short span of half a century they conquered half the then known world, proves that there is not an iota of truth in the accusations of the Europeans. But the sort of 'passive obsequious submission' which they ascribe to Islam and vociferously proclaim as one of its blemishes, was not known to the Companions of the Prophet. But their 'submission' was a submission which was synonymous with action, effort and enterprise. Or else it would be a misnomer to call it submission. On the contrary it must be called 'lifelessness or inaction', and it is precisely the reverse of the ideal

set by the Quran and the Prophet's life. But they set the example of active submission to God. Theirs was a submission most beneficent and fruitful for man's life here as well as hereafter, because it shields man against his egoism and over-confidence arising from success in his enterprises, as well as against despondency over his failure in others. The quintessence of Islamic teaching is that man should make proper use of his intellect which God has given him as a guiding light to help him think for himself, and that having done everything in his power he should resign himself to the Will of God, for the happy fructification of his labour. He must know that he cannot hold everything in the palm of his hand, and that there are forces which are beyond the range of his comprehension. This is the truth. It may be recalled here that when the Prophet was speaking to his followers about Fate, one of them asked him : "Should we then resign ourselves to the Will of God ? " to which he replied :

"Strive hard; for whatever one has been created for, that has been made easy unto him."

It is rather amusing to see the Europeans

keeping their eyes shut to the Biblical verses on Fate, which go far beyond the corresponding Quranic verses, while they, on the other hand, bracket Islam with Fatalism and proclaim that this belief is the cause of the downfall of the Muslims. For fear of making this article too long, I refrain from quoting any of the innumerable Biblical verses on the subject. Among the Europeans who are men of action, strictly follow the doctrine of action and perseverance, and generally deny predestination, it is impossible to find one who does not read the Holy Bible or does not consider it very sacred or treat its fundamental doctrines with reverence and admiration, even as we do. But then why should they ignore the verses about the absolute and inviolable Destiny occurring in it? They seem to be rather reluctant to bracket the words of Jesus with the doctrine of predestination.

For they make
It lawful one year
And forbidden another year.

(9 : 37)

The inner meaning of the verses of the Bible

and the Quran about the absoluteness of laws and destiny is that God has foreknowledge of all events in the universe long before they actually happen. But these verses neither deny freedom of will to man nor encourage inaction and passiveness on his part.

Namely, that no bearer
Of burdens can bear
The burden of another ;
That man can have nothing
But what he strives for ;
That (the fruit of) his striving
Will soon come in sight ;
Then will he be rewarded
With a reward complete.
(53: 38-41)

The truth contained in these verses is according to the Quran also contained in the Books revealed to Abraham, Moses and other Prophets. That the same truth is contained in the Bible is borne out by several of its teachings.

Conservative Muslims help the enemies of Islam to propagate falsehoods against it.

Let us again study the case of the dogma-

ridden Muslims. It is they who have encouraged the enemies of Islam to make aggressive attacks upon it and to propagate all sorts of falsehoods against it. It is a consequence of the dogmatism of our tradition-ridden Muslims that Europeans are encouraged to declare that Islam is a religion which not only conflicts with modern civilization, but even deprives its followers of the latter's benefits. But the boot is on the other leg. It is the beliefs of these conservatives that do not harmonise with civilization ; it is they who stand blocking its path. Islam is absolutely free from their supine conservatism.

Islam by its very nature and genius is a revolt against all degenerate tradition. It dug the grave for the abominable and debased traditions and usages of old and cut off all relationship with what was false and untrue. How can it then be called a religion of static inaction and conservatism.

Behold ! he said
To his father and his people
“ What are these images,
To which ye are
(So assiduously) devoted ? ”
They said, “ We found

Our fathers worshipping them."

He said, " Indeed ye

Have been in manifest

Error—ye and your fathers."

(21 : 52-54)

This is how the Quran refers to the story of prophet Abraham. The topic is continued as follows :

They said : " We worship

Idols, and we remain constantly

In attendance on them."

He said : " Do they listen

To you when ye call (on them),

Or do you good or harm ? "

'They said : " Nay, but we

Found our fathers doing

Thus (what we do)."

He said : " Do ye then

See whom ye have been

Worshipping,—

" Ye and your fathers before you ?—

For they are enemies to me ;

Not so the Lord and Cherisher

Of the Worlds.

(26 : 72—77)

At another place the Holy Quran says :

“ We found our fathers
Following a certain religion
And we will certainly
Follow in their footsteps.”
He said : “ What !
Even if I brought you
Better guidance than that
Which ye found
Your fathers following ? ”

(43 : 23-24)

When it is said to them :
“ Follow what God hath revealed : ”
They say : “ Nay ! We shall follow
The ways of our fathers : ” ,
What ! even though their fathers
Were void of wisdom and guidance ?
(2 : 170)

The Fools among the people
Will say : “ What hath turned
Them from the Qibla to which
They were used ? ” Say :
To God belong both East and West :
He guideth whom He will
To a Way that is straight. (2 : 142)

There are many more such verses to be found in the Quran, which urge men to rebel against and do away with ancient traditions and conventions when run counter to the purposes of Islam.

Those who understand Islam as it really is never fight shy of new orders which do not conflict with its doctrines and are free from evil. I am of opinion that anything which conduces to the health and strength of the national life of Muslims can never be repugnant to the religion which stands for the happiness of mankind. The Muslim scholars of Nejd, who keep aloof from Westerners, Westernism and the centres of modern inventions were asked by their King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud to give their opinion regarding the use of wireless telegraphy, telescope and electric vehicles. We all know what answer they gave. They replied that they were useful modern inventions and that there was nothing express or implied in the Book of God or the words of the Prophet which forbade their use.

Is it not conducive to the progress of a nation that its rulers should get immediate information about world events as soon as they take place, in order that they might be able to

control their own national affairs in good time? Imagine the pilgrims traversing their tedious distances in a few hours, for which formerly they had to spend weeks, travelling night and day. What a blessing it is for the Muslims ! Once when I met Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Tarki, of the scholars of Nejd, in Mecca, I asked his opinion about wireless and telephone. He said : " This is a question which has passed the stage of polemics. Whether they are permissible or not according to religious laws is so obvious that it needs no minute examination of the reasons for or against."

The opposition of the supine conservatives and the orthodox obscurantists is not something peculiar to Islam. Even amongst Christians in the beginning one section used to oppose everything new in word or deed, but later on sanctioned them. Galileo was anathematised by the Christians for declaring publicly that the earth revolved. Even to-day there are Christian divines who pronounce the anathema of heresy on those who say anything about the origin of the world which is contrary to what is said in the Bible. Only two years ago a student in one of the United States of America was convicted by a court for having argued in

favour of Darwin's theory, and a decree was given forbidding his further study. But the advancement of science remains nonetheless unaffected in America.

Although there are conservatives and obscurantists among the Christians too, those among the Muslims fight against all branches of human knowledge except what has come to them through foolish imitation. They have forgotten that natural sciences, Geometry, Mathematics, Astronomy, Medicine, Chemistry, Geology, and all other sciences beneficial to man have a bearing on matters connected with religion, although they have no direct relation with religion itself.

With what zeal and enthusiasm these subjects were taught in the academies like Al-Azhar, Al-Amavi, Az-Zaituna, Qairawan and in the Universities of Cordova, Baghdad, and Samarqand at a time when Islam could boast of its empires and its great men ! How glorious was the galaxy of geniuses and scholars produced by Islam, who were versed equally well in theology as in the science and could harmonise the laws of both like two blossoms united in a garland. Al-Qazi Ibn Rushd is the Arab philosopher best known among the

Europeans and he was a great theologian.

Islamic Civilization

There are some who blab that Islam could have never built a civilization of its own, and they point to its present state as evidence. This is a libel concocted by the enemies of Islam from without and the casuists who negative everything by their sophistry from within. The first group wants to give everything a Western tint and cast it in the Western mould. The aim of the second group is to sow the seeds of atheism in the world of Islam. I do not deny that religion has a relation to civilization and power over it. But it cannot be said that religion is always the final determinant of the tendencies of civilization, because the power and influence of religion over nations sometimes weakens, and they slip out of its control. Degeneration then overtakes them and disintegration creeps into their social fabric. Degeneration of the national character is the true cause of a nation's decadence and religion cannot be held responsible for it. A civilization which is regulated and controlled by religious laws is sometimes suddenly shaken

and subverted by violent external forces ; its foundations get undermined, and the whole structure tumbles down. In such cases, too, religion is not answerable for its ruin. The backwardness of Muslims in modern times is due not to their religion but to their ignorance of their religious teachings and neglect of its principles. As long as Islamic laws held sway, the Muslim nation remained great and glorious.

Islamic civilization is not a figment of imagination, but an incontrovertible fact. There is not a nation in Europe, whether German, French, English or Italian, but has a treasure of innumerable books on Islamic civilization, and that is the *prima facie* evidence of its existence. Had Islam been without a great civilization of its own bearing the imprint of its characteristic qualities, founded on the code of life set by its Prophet and the Quran, how could the European scholars (including those known to be its bitterest foes) indulge in frequent references to Islamic civilization, use copious citations from its history, and contrast it with other civilizations, pointing out its superior qualities which distinguished it from other civilizations ?

Islamic civilization is one of those magnificent civilizations that embellish the pages of the world history and fill to repletion the imperishable treasure houses of books with its grand relics and glorious memories. During the reign of Caliphs Mansur, Rashid, and Mamun, the City of Baghdad with its countless beautiful edifices, splendid amenities of life, unlimited wealth and resources, had reached a stage of civilization never approached by any nation before or after it. The population of the city was 25 lakhs in those days. Basra occupied the second place among cities and its population was five lakhs.

Damascus, Cairo, Aleppo, Samarqand, Ispahan—what consummate models and what perfect ideals have they presented, in all branches of art, in the cultivation of sciences, in the happy and contented life of the people, in the abundance of magnificent edifices!

Qairowan, Fez, Tlemcan, Morocco and other cities of Africa had attained such heights of splendour and magnificence that no nation of modern Europe can challenge or refute their claims.

Cardova, with its million and a half of population, was without a match on the conti-

nent. Besides the principal mosque, the city boasted of seven hundred other mosques. On my visit to that mosque during the last summer, the engineer who was deputed by the Spanish Government to accompany me, told me that it could accommodate eighty thousand people at prayer time, fifty thousand inside and thirty thousand outside.

When we went to Sahra Fort, we saw there not the remnants of a fort, but of a magnificent city. This Fort is nine hundred metres (three thousand feet) long and eight hundred metres broad. The Spaniards used to call it the City of Sahra. The archaeologists engaged in excavating its relics told me that they hoped to complete the work in fifty years. That there was no city in Europe in the 15th century, which could be compared with Granada, the capital city of a small kingdom still retained by Muslims in their decline bears eloquent testimony to the magnificence of Islamic civilization. When the city fell into the hands of the Spaniards, its population was five hundred thousand. There was not another city in all Europe which had half its population. The romantic and enchanting edifice of Al-Hambra of Granada exists even to-day, although in ruins

and dilapidation.

We have had but a glimpse of the products of the Islamic civilization and its golden age. Were we to dwell upon all the splendid achievements of the Muslims in the world, how many shelves of books will have to be written !

How many priceless books have been written by the European historians on Islamic civilization, how many beautiful photographs have been published by them ! Even the most malevolent critics of Islam have not dared to belittle the fruits of its civilization. What we are convinced of by their writings is that their motive is to deny that the Muslims have laid the foundation of any new science, or that they have made any original contribution to them by their researches. They satisfy themselves by saying that Muslims did nothing beyond propagating the learning which they had received from others and acted as a connecting link between the East and the West. But the views of these historians are dismissed by those who have carefully assessed the services rendered by Muslims to arts and sciences by propagating several, patronising some and perfecting others, and studied the theories they propounded, the natural laws they discovered and the

views they expressed on several subjects. When a person takes possession of a thing, transmutes it, and perfects it, its ownership vests in him.

There has been no civilization on the face of this earth, which has not assimilated something from the preceding one. It is a matter of common knowledge that every civilization is something to which every human being can justly claim he has contributed something. It is the integration of the thoughts of multitudes of people of diverse nature and the accumulated wealth of the intellectual fruits of innumerable races.

Malevolent Critics answered

The malevolent critics of Islam who deny its great contributions and its unique place in history and blab that the pioneers of Muslim civilization merely copied or learnt from others and followed or imitated them, seem to forget the patent fact that, at the time of its advent, Oriental civilization was a tangled mess and that Islam gave it a new orientation, recovered it from the ruin of ages and restored it to life. They are oblivious of the fact that it was Mus-

lims who lifted the Oriental civilization from the crumbling dust of decay. Decrepit and decayed, it lay buried under the dead mass of the earlier civilization, and it was the Muslims who picked up from the pile what was good, purged it of its ugly encrustations and gave it a new life. They burnished it and made it brilliant like the morning star, for those who had eyes to see. They lent it a new and exquisite charm by giving it Islamic tints. Above all, they gave it as its guide the Quran with which it kept company in the East and the West. All this, the critics seem to have forgotten. Those among the European scholars who have not been blinded by fanaticism and bigotry and who have sought to get at the truth with honesty and diligence have admitted that Islamic civilization is neither a copy nor a new edition of another, but that it was a civilization which emanated from the Quran and was born of the faith in the Unity of God.

The books translated by Muslims in the heyday of their civilization, the knowledge they discovered in them and the system of work and the wealth of ideas they found in the midst of their conquests neither mar the refreshing originality of their civilization nor

its essentially Arabic character. Later civilizations, it will be seen, always borrow from the earlier ones, build upon their ruins and perfect and adopt their legacy.

“ Knowledge is like a lost treasure for the Believer ; he seeks it even if it be in China.”

This saying of the Prophet reveals the truth about knowledge. This is one of the sacred laws of Islam.

However, even the most sceptical among the critics of Islam cannot deny the fact that in so far as the victories in the intellectual, spiritual or temporal field are concerned, Islam held a very high place in the world once, that all those victories were won in a period not exceeding 80 years and that no other nation has ever achieved so much in so short a time. Napoleon during his days of imprisonment in St. Helena, expressed amazement at the sudden rise of Islam and said: “ The Arabs conquered the world in just half a century ! ” It was no less a man than Napoleon Bonaparte who said it, in whose eyes even the greatest victories were as nothing.

“ In the eyes of small men small things look great; the eyes of great men see even great things small.”

This great man was astonished at the Arab conquests ; and the conquests stand unparalleled in history even to-day. In their age their sovereignty remained supreme. For two or three centuries they remained masters of the world with none to challenge them or dispute their sovereignty. And then they began to decline gradually. Their sovereignty and power in their conquered territories began to wane and dwindle. Their valour and stamina began to weaken. Their noble qualities and virtues fell a prey to corruption ; their religious fervour and zeal cooled down ; vain thoughts and ephemeral desires overcame them. These were the causes of their decline. Their suicidal wars among themselves, especially between the tribes of Qais and Yaman for sovereignty, power and leadership were another potent cause. It was these feuds that prevented the whole of Europe from coming under their sway as the Western part had done. The Muslims have only themselves to thank for the catastrophe that has befallen them. Adversity overtook them when they strayed from the straight path

the Quran had clearly laid for them. Victory and prosperity never left them as long as they acted in conformity with the clear teachings of the Quran. But as their actions began to be governed less and less by the Quran, and it became a book of mere recitations, their vigour and vitality declined, their grit and valour disappeared and their power and sovereignty left them. Enemies began to overrun their frontiers, encroach upon their territory and establish their rule.

The Greeks and the Romans before and after Christianity.

Before the advent of Christianity the Greeks were one of the most advanced nations, if not *the most advanced* nation in the world. They laid the foundations of philosophy and reached the acme of progress in science and art. How many great men rose in their midst, who stand even to-day as beacons of light and guidance for us !

Alexander of Macedonia, who protected and promoted the interests of the Greeks and propagated the Greek culture among the nations that came under his sway, was

the greatest conqueror, or at least one of the greatest conquerors, known in history. The reign of the Ptolemies who embellished and enriched the city of Alexandria with philosophies and sciences, was but a relic of the victories of Alexander. Not until the Greeks had embraced Christianity within a short time of its advent in the world, did this state of affairs undergo any change. But from the day they adopted the new religion they began to decline and move in a retrograde direction, and their pristine glory and majesty waned day by day. The Greek Empire sank lower and lower, as centuries rolled by, until it became a feudatory to the Ottoman Empire. If there has been any awakening or progress among them, it was since the last century. Still, what a contrast between its present condition and that of its pagan days!

Can it be averred that Christianity was answerable for the downfall of the Greeks? But those who declare that Islam is the cause of the decline of the nations that adopted it, must also admit that Christianity was the cause of the decline of the Greeks who were once in the vanguard of cultural advancement.

The case of the Roman Empire is similar. In the heyday of its glory there was none to match it in power and majesty. The Empire continued in its zenith of power and glory until Emperor Constantine embraced Christianity. But with his conversion, the intellectual and material condition of the Romans received a set back. Their power and sovereignty began to decline first in the western and then in the eastern territories. After decline had set in, they never saw progress for another fifteen centuries. Only in the nineteenth century do we see them striving again to regain their lost glory. But till now they have not reached the splendour of their pagan days.

Can it therefore be said that the adoption of the Christian religion was responsible for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire? Many a European thinker has attributed the decline of these two civilizations to Christianity. Several of them have expressed the view that the decline of the Muslims is also due to some such cause. But these two views have to be brushed aside as erroneous.

The real causes of the downfall that overtook the Romans since the adoption of Christianity and that of the Greeks before

them, after they had incorporated the Gospel of St. Paul in Christianity, were the corruption of the national character, the enfeeblement of the national will, the spread of lax ideals, the propagation of Bohemianism and Atheism, the senility, as Ibn Khaldun calls it, of the Government and such other internal factors, together with external causes like the aggressions of other nations. Had Christianity not made its appearance on the scene, even then it cannot be said that the Greeks and the Romans could have escaped the consequences of inner corruptions and foreign aggressions.

The view expressed by certain European historians that the decline and fall of the Greek and Roman Empires and the extinction of their civilizations were due to their coming under the sway of Christianity is erroneous. That the codes of law pertaining to those civilizations were replaced by that of Christianity is the only argument that could be urged against Christianity. It is but natural that on such occasions of revolutionary changes the existing order of things is shaken and the law of the realm itself is replaced by a new one. But it would be hard to maintain that paganism was more conducive to civilized life and public

weal than Christianity.

The argument is similar to what the enemies of Islam urge against it. They contend that Islam was born at a time when the East was immersed in splendour and wealth and that its advent spelt the ruin of Oriental civilizations. From the foregoing it will be clear how absurd and contrary to truth the allegation is. The fact is that long before the dawn of Islam Oriental civilizations had perished, obliterated and sunk deep in the abyss of decadence. It was Islam and Islam alone that restored and reorientated these decadent civilizations and brought into existence cities like Baghdad, Basra, Samargand, Bukhara, Damascus, Cairo, Qairowan and Cordova, which became centres of culture and learning. It was Islam and Islam alone that reinforced the foundations of whatever remained of the older civilizations of the East, gave them shape and beauty and opened up new lands for them which the Eastern peoples had never trodden or even dreamed of before.

If the European crusaders that came surging from the West and the Mongol hordes that came flooding from the East washed away in their devastating deluge the treasures of

Islam and razed to the ground the great monuments of civilizations erected in the Islamic cities ; and whatever survived the spoiler's hand was destroyed by the inner canker that had entered the Muslim world, namely, the internecine wars among Muslim rulers, their lives of unbridled licence and self-indulgence, their callous indifference to the simple teachings of the Quran and the consequent sterilisation of their virtues of manhood, Islam cannot be blamed for the decadence of the Islamic civilization ; nor can the resultant evils and catastrophies be fathered on the Quran. On the contrary, the blame must be laid at the doors of the Europeans who like savages perpetrated unimaginable barbarities on it, the guilt must remain with the Mongol hordes that pounced on it like wild beasts ; the responsibility must rest with those Muslim traitors who cast to the winds the teachings and commandments of the Quran and sold its divine verses for a mess of pottage.

European nations continued to embrace Christianity in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth centuries of the Christian era. Several of the Eastern nations of Europe adopted Christianity only in the tenth century. They gradually

secured mastery in the world through the advance of science and arts. It is hardly four centuries since they have got this present enlightenment. In other words, it is after the lapse of a thousand years since their adoption of the Bible that they have become enlightened as they are to-day. Some nations among them took seven hundred and some others eight hundred years to become sufficiently civilized. It is this period that is known in history as the Middle Ages. I don't mean to say that during this period all the nations of Europe were groping in the dark. All that I say is that, as their own historians have admitted, the Arabs were far ahead of them in culture and civilization. As an evidence to prove this may be cited from among modern books the History of the World written by the well-known English author and thinker H. G. Wells, and the History of Oriental Civilization written by Grocey the French writer who had made a special study of the Oriental civilizations. The one unanimous opinion expressed by almost all historians, as the result of prolonged historical researches, is that "the Arabs were the teachers of the Europeans during the Middle Ages, and those of them who happened to get

educated at the Arab institutions of learning, on their return home, used to refer to it with⁴ pride to other members of their society". Historians have not discovered anything so far to disprove this ; nor can they ever do so.

Causes of Europe's previous backwardness and present advancement

CAN it be maintained that the cause of the decadence of the medieval Europe for a thousand years was Christianity ?

Yes ; the Protestants trace the origin of the causes of this decadence to the Church of the Pope. They absolve Christianity of any responsibility. They maintain that not until Luther and Calvin protested against and repudiated the authority of the Roman Church did Europe see any renaissance.

But Voltaire and his atheistic school do not recognise any great difference between the Protestants and the Catholics. Their view is that the dogmas of both sects are almost the same and that they are a bar to the progress of science. That is why, when someone spoke to Voltaire about Luther and Calvin, he exclaimed : " Neither is worth the shoes of Muham-

mad." What he meant was that although many believed Luther and Calvin to be the fountain-head of European renaissance, Muhammad had brought about such a tremendous reformation that neither of them could be bracketted with him.

The truth is that Christianity is not responsible for the thousand years of darkness that enveloped the Christian Europe. On the contrary, the credit should go to Christianity for civilizing the pagan Europe.

Look at the Japanese. They are wedded to idolatry. Some of them follow Buddhism. Some are called 'Tavies'. There are many among them who follow the Chinese philosopher, Confucius. A couple of thousand years elapsed before they attained their present splendid civilization and glorious position among the nations of the world. From this long slumber they awoke only sixty years ago. From then they began to rise and advance steadily, and consequently their condition improved. They have attained a high rank in the comity of nations. To-day they are counted as a great and civilized nation. But they continued to be wedded to idolatry all the same.

Their faith in idolatry, therefore, was not the cause of their earlier backwardness; nor is it the cause of their present progress. Japan and Russia competed with each other; they fought each other; and from the war Japan emerged victorious. The Russian army was twice as large as that of Japan. It can easily be seen from this that Japan was far more advanced than Russia. But as for their religious faiths, the Japanese believed in idolatry and the Russians in Christianity.

Therefore the practice of treating religion as the criterion for judging the progress or decadence of a civilization requires to be qualified.

From the above examples will it be safe to argue that it was the Bible that rendered the Russians inferior to the Japanese, or that it was the goddess, daughter of the Sun, that led the Japanese to victory against the Russians?

There are many forces and influences converging on the fundamental causes which give rise to such phenomena. If constant action along the line of these forces is carried on for producing good or evil, their cumulative effect may be stronger than religions and faiths. So it happens that at times the cumulative evil of

adverse forces defeats the good that a religion can do and the cumulative good of favourable conditions overcomes the evil that may be inherent in a faith.

The progress of Japan is due to the Japanese innate sense of honour, their ingenuity and skill, and their age-long and deep-rooted competitive spirit which urges them to excel others in power and honour. The beliefs like "the god of to-day has a horse to ride on," which is found in their laymen, are no bar to their national progress. It is needless to dilate upon this and examine at great length the causes of Japan's phenomenal rise.

Examples may be cited without end. But those already quoted are sufficient for our purpose. Really speaking, I would not have ventured upon this digression. But I thought it necessary to say at least this much at this juncture, in view of the fact that Christian priests, missionaries and numerous Europeans are attacking Islam from all sides, shouting from house tops that Islam is the hall mark of reactionaryism, and the symbol of supine conservatism. They go on propagating such absurd lies from the platform and through their Press and argue that one knows the tree from its

fruit and that the present plight of the Muslims is the result of the Quranic teaching.

It is
A grievous thing that issues
From their mouths as a saying.
What they say is nothing
But falsehood !

(18 : 5)

The article published in the last issue of the French-owned monthly journal "*Majallatul-Ihyaa*" by Monsieur Dan, French Ambassador in Rome, is an instance in point. Speaking of the awakening in Morocco and other places, after what he calls the "Night of Islam," he says :

" If the backwardness of Muslims is due to the vicissitudes of time, that may be called the 'Night of Islam.' While, then, the Christian Europe had been plunged in barbarism or something very much akin to it for about a thousand years, how much longer had been the 'Night of Christianity' . "

What a pity it is that people drag in religion in matters with which it has little to do, despite the fact that history proves the

absurdity of such arguments. It is time, we realized that it is not reasonable to drag in religion in such controversies and to ascribe to it wholly the rise or fall of a nation.

The inspiration Quran gives for the acquisition of knowledge.

THE Holy Quran urges the Muslims to vie with other nations along the path of progress.

If the Muslims resolve earnestly to work with diligence and advance like other nations and begin to strive hard with strong determination, it is still within their reach. In this respect Islam certainly gives them surer guidance and enlightenment.

Are those equal, those who know
And those who do not know ?
(39 : 9)

And hath gifted him
Abundantly with knowledge.
(2 : 247)

But no one knows
Its hidden meanings except God.

And those who are firmly grounded
In knowledge.

(3 : 7)

They can hardly find a better custodian of
knowledge than the Quran, which inspires
them to acquire knowledge by these and similar
other verses.

There is no god but He :
That is the witness of God,
His angels and those endued
With knowledge, standing firm
On Justice.

(3 : 18)

Nay, here are Signs
Self-evident in the hearts
Of those endowed with knowledge.

(29 : 49)

God will
Raise up, to (suitable) ranks
(And degrees), those of you
Who believe and who have
Been granted (mystic) Knowledge.

(58 : 11)

And
To instruct them in Scripture
And Wisdom.

(62 : 2)

He granteth wisdom
To whom He pleaseth ;
And he to whom wisdom
Is granted receiveth
Indeed a benefit overflowing.

(2 : 269)

But We
Had already given the people
Of Abraham the Book
And Wisdom, and conferred
Upon them a great kingdom.

(4 : 54)

Such are the numerous verses of the Holy
Quran relating to Knowledge.

It is He Who has sent
Amongst the Unlettered
An apostle from among
Themselves, to rehearse
To them His Signs,

To sanctify them, and
To instruct them in Scripture
And Wisdom,—although
They had been, before,
In manifest error.

(62 : 2)

There are verses like this which specially refer to the Arabs.

There are some who contend that the words corresponding to 'Knowledge' and 'Wisdom' occurring in the Quran relate to religious knowledge and religious wisdom only, and that they are not used in their generic sense. Mr. Saicar who lives in Morocco, writing contumelious books on Islam and contributes articles to the *Catholic Morocco*, is one of those who are of this opinion. The stuff he usually writes is so filthy and is conceived in such debased taste, that it does not deserve the honour of a review. The language he affects is so insolent and abusive that no decent person can read it without horror and disgust. To all those who have carefully studied the Quranic verses relating to knowledge, wisdom and observation of natural phenomena, it should be obvious that the

words corresponding to knowledge and wisdom occurring therein have the same sense in which they are commonly used.

“ Seek knowledge even if it be in China.” This saying of the Prophet makes it clearer still. If we take the word knowledge to mean religious knowledge, as Mr. Saicar would have us do, we should have also to believe that the Holy Prophet ordained the Muslims to seek religious knowledge from the Chinese who believed in and practised idolatry. The absurdity of the interpretation is obvious.

It can easily be seen from their context that the words corresponding to knowledge, occurring in the Quran denote worldly knowledge as well, especially as they occur in verses dealing with the world and its creation. The verses of the Quran on this subject are more numerous than those relating to prayer and other acts of piety.

Seest thou not that
God sends down rain
From the sky ? With it
We then bring out produce
Of various colours.
And in the mountains

Are tracts white and red,
Of various shades of colour
And black intense in hue. .
And so amongst men
And crawling creatures and cattle,
Are they of various colours.
Those truly fear God,
Among His Servants,
Who have knowledge.

(35 : 27-28)

The reference here is obviously not to those who are learned in subjects like prayer and fasting, but to those who have knowledge about rains, plants, mountains, living beings like man and the principles underlying their creation.

I took it for granted that Mr. Saïcar was a man who had some regard for truth, and published some articles in *Al-Manar* refuting certain of his remarks denying the very existence of Islamic civilization. In this rejoinder I said nothing transgressing the limits of decency and decorum. In fact, I even showed how considerable was the influence of Christian civilization and disproved the contention of certain European writers that Christianity was a bar to the progress of civilization and had

been the cause of the decline and downfall of the Greeks and the Romans. But Mr. Saicar in reply published a series of articles slandering Islam. It is not possible to retort to them except by publishing similar slanders about Christianity. Simply for hitting back a man called Saicar or the missionaries of his ilk, it is neither sensible nor fair to indulge in statements calculated to provoke or pain the entire Christian brethren; nor does it give me any pleasure to do so. Mr. Saicar is a very conceited person, and his articles are replete with errors and absurdities. In order to give the reader an idea of the nature and tone of Mr. Saicar's writing, a sentence or two may be quoted here from these articles. He says: "The Quran does not use the word 'knowledge' in its commonly understood sense. It means religious knowledge, because worldly knowledge is not considered worth while in the Quran." Suffice it to say that sweeping allegations of such incorrigible coxcombs hardly deserve reply.

National Renaissance and Religion

WHY should we turn to the Quran for our inspiration and urge to acquire knowledge?

Should our renaissance be essentially religious? Will it not do if our renaissance be rational as in Europe? These are the questions asked by some. Well, reawakening the nation is our aim. The nation must acquire a habit of mind conducive to the desire for knowledge, no matter whether through rational or religious means. My only fear is that if we do not give the Quranic teachings their due place in our course of study and discipline, it will gradually lead us to atheism and will make us the victims of a life of licence and unrestrained libertinism. The evils resulting therefrom will far outweigh the good of such an education. Therefore, it is necessary 'that we should have religious training along with training in purely worldly knowledge. Does anyone in the East believe that the awakening in the West was achieved without any religious training? "Our culture is based on Christianity," said the German Chancellor in his Reichstag speech three years ago. It is worth remembering that this was proclaimed by the Germans who are far advanced in scientific learning, industry and mechanical inventions.

Do we see even a single university in Germany, England or in any other civilized

country of Europe where Christian philosophy has not been assigned a permanent place ?

To those in Europe, therefore, 'national awakening' and 'national unity' do not mean merely that of its soil, water, rocks or trees. Nor do they mean by 'nation' the children of the same flesh and blood. In their conception the elements constituting their nation are their common territories, history, culture, avocations, industries, religious faith, distinctive character, conventions, customs and manners. It is these that they take pains to preserve. It is for these that they are ready to sacrifice everything.

Conclusion

IN order that Muslims may awake, arise and ascend the highest pinnacle of advancement and progress, like any other modern nation, it is their sacred duty to embark upon a '*Jihad*' by sacrificing their life and wealth in consonance with the oft-repeated commandments of the Quran. It is this kind of '*Jihad*' that is known in modern parlance as 'sacrifice.'

No nation has achieved victory but by sacrifice. Perhaps Shaikh Muhammad Bisyooni Umran and other questioners like him, have

fancied that my views in the matter, as the fundamental basis for progress, would not be on this line. They might perhaps have expected me to say that the royal road to our success lies in trying to understand Einstein's Theory of Relativity, or studying about X-Ray and bacteria, or proving that wireless telegraphy depends upon short waves and not long waves, or in learning all about Edison's inventions. They might have thought that I would quote some such example as the report of the recent explosion of a British airship, and explain that the explosion was due to the fact that it was filled with hydrogen and not with helium, and that hydrogen is a highly inflammable gas though lighter than helium ; whereas helium is not combustible, though it is heavier than hydrogen.

But these are not fundamental things. They are but secondary. They are not examples either. They are not the cause but only the effect. The greatest lesson is 'sacrifice', striving by expending bodily energy and material wealth. When a nation has learnt this lesson and acts in consonance with it, no doubt, it will be the recipient of all other knowledge and the best fruits accruing therefrom.

A needy man need not necessarily know what he should do for fulfilling his needs. "A father while loving his child very dearly, may at the same time be an ignorant man. Nevertheless, when the child falls ill he goes in search of the best doctor. He knows that the doctor has in his possession something beneficent—the knowledge about the ailment and its remedy. Although he has not the knowledge possessed by the doctor, his anxiety for the well being of his child tells him that that knowledge is necessary for him." So said the great Oriental philosopher Sayyid Jamal-ud-Din Afghani to me once.

Muhammad Ali was not a very learned man. It is doubtful if he was even literate. But within a short time he regenerated Egypt from its supine condition and transformed it into a living nation. He could do all that in his own life time. That was the result of the great lesson he had learnt. That great lesson is Will and Resolution. That Will spurs one on to the search of knowledge; that Will inspires nations to march forward.

If Muslims will resolve and strive, taking their inspiration from the Quran, they can attain the rank of the Europeans, the Americans

and the Japanese, in learning science and making progress. Yet withal they can preserve their own faith, just as others have done. Nay, more. If we derive our inspiration from the Quran, we would be better qualified for progress than others. They are human beings ; we are also human beings. Our defect is that we do not strive. The habit of consulting omens before every new venture, our tame submission to whatever happens, despair and pusillanimity are the things that invite misfortunes and calamities for us. Therefore, let us shake off despair ; let us take a step forward ; let us keep steady our ambitions. With constant discipline, with will and determination to march onward, and with correct understanding of the essentials of '*Iman*'—true faith—taught by the Quran, let us strive and continue to strive. Know that if we do so our hopes and aspirations will soon be realized.

And those who strive
In Our (Cause),—We will
Certainly guide them
To Our Paths :
For verily God
Is with those
Who do right.

(29 : 69)

